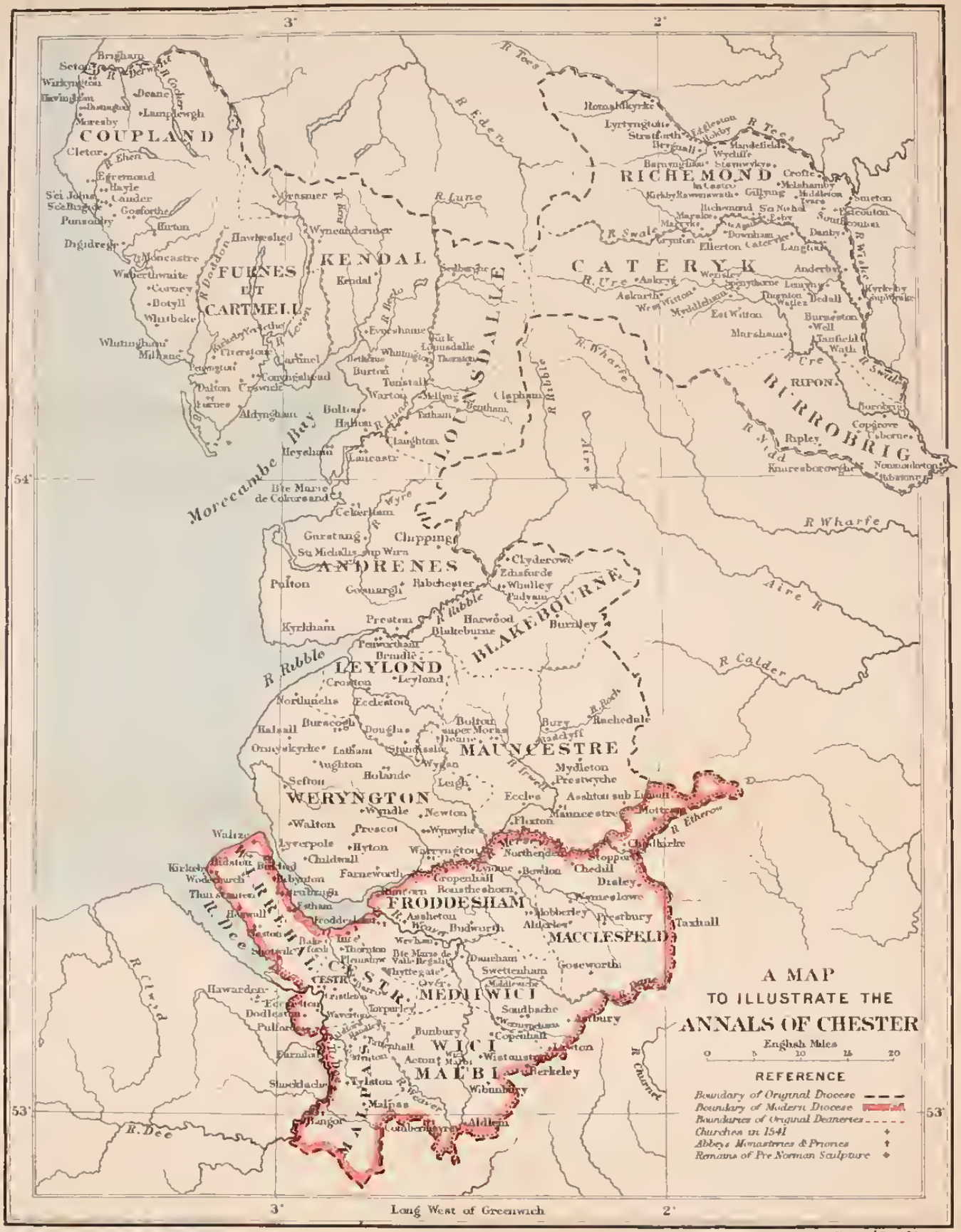
Diocesan Histories

Chester

45, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, E.C.
BRIGHTON: 129, NORTH STREET.
NEW YORK: E. & J. B. YOUNG & CO.

1895.


A MAP
TO ILLUSTRATE THE
ANNALS OF CHESTER
English Miles
0 5 10 15 20
REFERENCE
Boundary of Original Diocese
Boundary of Modern Diocese
Boundaries of Original Deaneries
Churches in 1541
Abbeys Monasteries & Priories
Remains of Pre Norman Sculpture
COUPLAND
FURNES ET CARTMELL
KENDAL
RICHEMOND
CATERYK
RIPON
BIRROBRIG
LONSDALE
ANDRENES
BLAKEBOURNE
LEYLOND
MAUNCESTRE
WERYNGTON
FRODDESHAM
MACCLESFELD
MEDIWICI
WICI
MALBI
Morecambe Bay
R. Dee
R. Mersey
R. Ribble
R. Wharfe
R. Aire
R. Calder
R. Tees
R. Eden
R. Lune
R. Ure
R. Swale
R. Derwent
R. Etherow
R. Weaver
R. Gowy
R. Clwyd
R. Churnet
Long West of Greenwich
Stanfords Geog.l Estab.t London

DIOCESAN HISTORIES.

CHESTER

BY THE

REV. RUPERT H. MORRIS, D.D., F.S.A.,

PREBENDARY OF MATHRY IN ST. DAVID'S CATHEDRAL,

VICAR OF ST. GABRIEL'S, WARWICK SQUARE, S.W.

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE TRACT COMMITTEE.

LONDON:

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,

NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, CHARING CROSS, W.C.;

43, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, E.C.

BRIGHTON: 129, NORTH STREET.

NEW YORK: E. & J. B. YOUNG & CO.

1895.

Richard Clay & Sons, Limited,
London & Bungay.

PREFACE

THE facts recorded in the following pages have been gleaned from many different sources. The valuable collections of manuscripts at the Public Record Office and the British Museum have been of great service. The Visitation Books of the diocese, which were most courteously and generously placed at my disposal by Mr. John Gamon, the Registrar of the diocese, have afforded invaluable information, and much that has been gathered from them is now published for the first time. Selections have been made from the Churchwardens' Accounts of different parishes in the diocese. Peck's *Desiderata Curiosa*, and the volumes of the Chetham Society, have frequently been laid under contribution. Especial thanks are due, and are hereby heartily tendered, to the Rev. F. Sanders for many useful hints, and for permission to make use of his interesting monograph, "Historic Notes of the Bishops of Chester." Free use also has been made of the author's *Chester in Plantagenet and Tudor Times*, in treating of the Abbey of St. Werburgh.

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CHESTER

CHAPTER I

Early traces of Christianity—Alleluia victory—Battle of Chester—Christianity in Wirral—Sandbach, Halton, and Winwick crosses—"The Terror of the Northmen"—Ancient dedications.

THE district embraced within the diocese of Chester, as formed by Henry VIII., was occupied at the time of the Roman invasion by two distinct Celtic tribes—the Cornavii, who were settled in the present Cheshire; and a much more numerous and powerful people, the Brigantes, who held Lancashire, Westmoreland, and Cumberland, as well as a considerable portion of Yorkshire. Their religion was of the polytheistic type, with an admixture of druidism; but no other traces remain of their worship than an occasional *maen hir*, or long stone (which has been subsequently, in all probability, converted into a Christian emblem), some cup and circular markings, and a few local names, such as Belisama (the name of the Ribble), and Aerven, the goddess of war, an early name for

the Dee. The Roman remains which have been discovered from time to time at Chester, Manchester, and other military stations in this district afford no indications of the prevalence of Christianity. None of the inscriptions on the tombstones of the legionaries bear the record of any Christian hope.

Many of these inscriptions preserve touching reference to the deep affection subsisting between wife and husband, mother and child, master and slave; but all are dedicated *Dis manibus*, "to the gods of the shades." The altars, of which no less than twelve have been found at Chester, are inscribed with names either of the deities of Roman mythology (Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Tanarus, a Welsh form of Tonans, the Thunderer, Mars Conservator, Minerva, Æsculapius, the Genius of the Place, or of the Emperor; the Nymphs and Fountains), or they are dedicated to the *Deæ matres*, to whom several altars have been found in Belgic Gaul and along the banks of the Rhine.[1]

There are in the Chester Museum two or three relics of Mithraic worship, but no dedications, as at Carlisle, to those gods with strange uncouth names supposed to be the deities worshipped by the Brythonic Celts, such as Belatin castor, Maponus, Setlocenia, Coventina (goddess of memory), and the like.

It is not, however, to be assumed that the Christian faith was not taught in Cheshire and Lancashire during the period of the Roman occupation. The

[1] I am not forgetting the so-called ecclesiastical stone, which I believe to be that of a Roman matron and her attendant.

two legions (the 20th and the 2nd Pia Adjutrix), which were, like Roman soldiers in other parts of the empire, important heralds of the Prince of Peace, must have had amongst them more than one who had some knowledge of the Gospel message. But it is more than doubtful whether this saving knowledge radiated to any distance beyond the military stations. The villas and other remains which have been discovered are usually close to the great centres of population, showing that the Romans made no attempt to spread their influence outside a certain area. The rest of the land, often a dreary succession of fen and morass varied with long tracts of unreclaimed forest, was left to the older inhabitants, who for the most part would keep aloof from the Roman camp and the great highways, and did not therefore come under Roman influence, whether for ordinary civilization or for religious teaching. There must, however, have been exceptions to this. It happened, not infrequently, if we may judge from sepulchral inscriptions, that the legionary soldiers intermarried with the natives, and on the completion of their term of service settled down permanently on the lands assigned them. Whether this leavening had a Christian tendency cannot be ascertained. It is worth notice in this connection that the tonsure, which was one of the points of difference between the Celtic and the Roman Church, as practised in Britain and Ireland, is said to be a survival of a druidic fashion.

We must pass over a long interval of years after the final withdrawal of the 20th legion from Chester (about 410 A.D.), before we come to any definite

statement in connection with the religious condition of the district.

Hardly twenty years had gone by since that final withdrawal before the inhabitants of Cheshire must have suffered severely from the incursions of the Picts and Saxons. In the hastily-gathered multitude which collected under the standard of the Bishop Germanus, and was successful in defeating the barbarians, there would doubtless be many from Cheshire. The site of the battle, Maes Garmon ("Field of Germanus"), is not far from Mold in Flintshire, and the church in the adjoining parish, Llanarmon yn Yal, commemorates the visit of the Saint, Germanus. As Mold is only some ten miles from Chester, and is so constantly associated in later history with Cheshire, we cannot be wrong in assuming that the "Alleluia Victory" must have borne fruit at least in the neighbourhood of Chester, if not throughout the whole district. We are on surer ground in dealing with the "Battle of Chester." In the story of the struggle between the Britons and the Saxons under Æthelfrith, which culminated in the so-called Battle of Chester in 613, the monks of Bangor Monachorum, or Iscoed, play an important part. This place, now a small village on the borders of Cheshire and Shropshire, called by Bede Bancornburg, is identified by some writers with Bovium, a station on the great Roman road between Chester and Wroxeter. The names of three of its gates are still preserved—Porth Hwgan on the north-west, Porth Clais on the south, and High on the east. (E. Llwyd, writing in 1699, says the fourth gate was "in Dwngre.")

A monastic establishment of some importance was in existence here before the arrival of the Italian mission under Augustine (A.D. 596). A somewhat doubtful tradition declares that Pelagius (Morgan, the sea-born), who was born A.D. 350, belonged to this house. The community must have been in a flourishing condition to have been able to send a detachment to Bangor Vawr in Carnarvonshire in 516, as well as another four years later to Bangor in Ireland. It was the last Abbot Dunawd, or Dinoth, who, with seven British bishops, met Augustine in conference, and with the traditional spirit of independence refused to accept his supremacy or adopt his suggestions. Augustine, angered at the repulse, retorted that if they would not preach the Gospel to the Saxons as brethren, they must not be surprised if they were slain by them as enemies, words which, in the light of subsequent events, were regarded as a prophecy, some even going so far as to suggest that Æthelfrith of Northumbria was instigated by Augustine in revenge to attack the monks.

At that time this monastery was one of the largest in Britain, consisting (according to Bede, who lived in the century that witnessed the destruction of the monastery) of at least 2100 monks—that is, seven bodies of 300 each. Bede relates how, on the advance of Æthelfrith upon Chester in 613, the monks of Bangor, anxious for the success of their fellow-countrymen, after a three days' fast sent forth 1200 of their brethren, who made their way to the battle-field, and there offered up prayers for victory to their nation.

Æthelfrith watched the wild gestures of the monks

as they stood apart from the host with arms outstretched in prayer, and bade his men attack them first of all. "Bear they arms or no," said the king, "they fight against us when they cry against us to their God." The slaughter was so complete that only fifty escaped, the Welsh chieftain, Brochmael, who had undertaken to protect them, having basely deserted them. This has been called the Battle of Chester, and it is stated by more than one writer that the massacre of the monks took place under the walls of Chester. But it is more probable that the scene of the tragedy should be placed nearer to the monastery, at Caergwrle, or, with still greater probability, at Holt, which position on the Dee opposite Farndon bears, in documents as late as the Elizabethan period, the alternative name of Castrum Leonum, Castle of Lions, the seal bearing a lion rampant. Local names along what would be the line of march between Bangor and Chester still preserve the memory of a terrible disaster to the British arms. Among these may be mentioned *Maes yr Ing*, "the field of agony," near Worthenbury, and Bryn Yockin (*Yr ochain*, the "hill of groaning") near Rossett. The faith of Woden and Thor might appear for the time to have triumphed over the religion of the Crucified One. The heathen Saxon might have had some apparent justification for taunting the British Christians with the derisive question: "Where is now thy God?" The great monastery was razed to the ground. This would be no great task, for the monastic buildings of the Celtic Christians were of the simplest possible character. There were no such elaborate structures as William of Malmes-

bury, who confounds it with Bangor in Carnarvonshire, evolves apparently out of his own imagination. He says: "No place could show greater remains of half-demolished churches and multitude of other ruins." It was in fact simply constructed of wattle-work—*i. e.* osiers interwoven and plastered over, which when destroyed would leave but little trace behind. But the spiritual influence of the faithful occupants of this monastery did not pass away with the destruction of their corporate home. It extended to other and far distant districts. Not only had they sent forth a number of brethren to settle in Bangor, or Benchor, in Ireland, but Deiniol Wyn, the son of Dunawd, the last abbot of Bangor Is Coed, founded a church at Hawarden, still dedicated to him (St. Deiniol's). He established a monastery at Bangor Vawr in Carnarvonshire, and later was appointed by the British king, Maelgwn Gwynedd, the first Bishop of Bangor. It was Eurgain, the saintly daughter of this same Maelgwn Gwynedd, who founded the church of Northop, a few miles from Hawarden, which preserves in its Welsh form the name of the foundress, Llaneurgain; and we cannot doubt that holy men and women would endeavour to make their influence felt at so important a centre as Chester.

The British Christians have been censured for their refusal to take their part with Augustine in preaching the Gospel to the heathen Saxons. It must be remembered that the Britons were engaged in a life and death struggle with the Saxon invaders for the possession of their native land, and that they were being thrust further and further back into the corners

of the island. Such a time of bitter anguish and hard fighting was certainly not favourable for the preaching and hearing of the Gospel of peace as regards either the conquering or the conquered race. But, as we have seen, the British Christians did not neglect the duty of evangelization in the districts which still remained to them. It has been suggested[1] that Christianity was first preached to Britons in the peninsula of the Wirral by Cyndeyrn or Kentigern in 560, about the time when, passing from Strathclyde on the coast of Lancashire to North Wales, he founded the monastery at Llanelwy or St. Asaph, and that the holy man he left there as its first bishop in 573, St. Asaph, tended the infant Church in Wirral. If this very probable suggestion is accepted, it establishes one more bond of union between the Church of England in England and in Wales. The same writer goes on to show that, after the Battle of Chester in 613, the British remnant left in Wirral remained Christian, but, hated by the English and hating in return, made no attempt to convert their conquerors. The later conversion of the English is to be attributed to St. Aidan or St. Chad.

The work was not left entirely, however, to ecclesiastics. It is remarkable that hardly forty years after the light of Christian truth had been apparently extinguished by Æthelfrith's destruction of the monastery at Bangor Iscoed, Penda, "the strong," the impersonation of the power of heathendom in Middle England, before whom the saintly Oswald and four other kings had fallen, was to find his own daughter

[1] Rev. A. E. P. Gray, in *Journal Brit. Arch. Assoc.*, 1884.

and one of his sons allied to those who professed the faith he so bitterly opposed; whilst another son, Wulfhere, and his granddaughter, Werburga, were to have their names associated to all time with the evangelization of Mercia, as royal nursing-father and nursing-mother of the Church in that important district.

The story of their work and of Oswald the Christian son of the heathen Æthelfrith has been told elsewhere. It only remains to add some details specially relating to Cheshire and Lancashire. Some at least of the early Christian monuments which have been found in these counties bear silent testimony to the great religious revival which went on there in the seventh century. The greater number of the crosses and monuments cannot be earlier than the ninth century, some belonging to the eleventh century; and it is doubtful whether the local tradition about the Sandbach crosses—that they were erected to commemorate the conversion of Peada, Penda's son, to Christianity in 653—is to be accepted unhesitatingly. Whether these Sandbach crosses belong to this early date, or are to be referred to the next century, they preserve a most interesting group of Christian subjects, probably the finest in all England. The several panels include the following scenes—the Crucifixion, with the sun and moon above, and St. Mary and St. John below, surrounded by the symbols of the four Evangelists; the Nativity, with the ox and the ass kneeling before the Holy Child in the manger-cradle; the Virgin enthroned, holding the Holy Child, with a saint on either side and the

Holy Dove above; Christ in glory, with an angel on the left and St. Peter carrying the key on the right; Christ led bound before Pilate; Christ carrying the cross.[1]

Another important cross, much weathered, at Halton in Lancashire, curiously illustrates the existence at the time of Paganism side by side with Christianity. On the east and north faces are scenes from the Scandinavian mythology, representing Sigurd roasting the heart of the dragon Fafni on a spit—his horse Grani returning home riderless after his master's death —and Regin, the dwarf-smith, working at his forge. On the opposite face, amongst other Christian subjects, is to be seen Christ enthroned, with two smaller figures clasping His feet. It is one more instance, I believe, of the appropriation by Christians of heathen monuments. Again, the sculpture on the cross at Winwick in Lancashire has been supposed by a competent authority[2] to refer to St. Oswald, to whom the church at Winwick is dedicated—one panel representing his dismemberment after his defeat by Penda, whilst the other shows water being carried from St. Oswald's well, which is a short distance from the church. The rest of the early Christian monuments in Cheshire and Lancashire found at Neston, Bromborough, Hilbre, West Kirby, Overchurch, in the Wirral peninsula; Chester, Macclesfield, Lyme Park in Cheshire; Bolton, Heysham, Whalley, and Lancaster in Lancashire, are of much later date. No remains exist of

[1] See for further particulars Mr. Romilly Allen's article, *Chester Arch. Society's Journal*, vol. v. Part III.

[2] Dr. Browne, Bishop of Stepney.

any Saxon churches in these counties. The earlier churches were certainly built of wood or of wattle. Stowe, in his *Survey of London*, has made a curious slip in speaking of the Wirral: "These Saxons were likewise ignorant of building with stone until the year 680, for then it is affirmed that Benet, Abbot of Wirrall, master to the Venerable Bede, first brought artificers of stone houses and glasse windows into this island amongst the Saxons, arts before that time unto them unknown, and therefore used they but wooden buildings." Stowe is referring to Benedict Biscop, who was of *Wearmouth*, not of Wirral.

However other parts of Cheshire may have fared, it is certain that the Wirral peninsula suffered most severely from the invasion of the Northmen, an invasion the memory of which abides in the Norse names preserved so markedly here as compared with the neighbouring districts. Whilst the Christianizing influence of the British settlers has left no other trace than such names as Landican, Poulton-Lancelyn, the numerous villages with the termination -by point to the Norse immigration—such are Whitby, Kirby, Frankby, Greasby, Pensby, Irby. Not more than 300 years had elapsed after the triumph of the Saxon when the Saxons themselves had to suffer in turn the miseries they had inflicted on the Britons—to see their fair fields ravaged, their towns sacked and burnt, their churches and monasteries ruthlessly destroyed.

It was in 1000 that King Æthelred's fleet mustered at Chester, and thence proceeded against the Viking rovers who were sweeping the western waters, and carrying off their valuable spoils from the mainland.

And it was most probably a little before that time that the wave of heathenism swept over the Wirral. But the Norsemen did not long remain in heathen darkness. They submitted to learn the religion of the English; and hence, with Thurstanton, which recalls the name of the god Thor, we find also West Kirby as well as Kirby-in-Wallasey. In the litany of the period we are discussing, one of the suffrages was "Deliver us, O Lord, from the terror of the Northmen." The terror of these Northmen had at an earlier period, in 875, forced the nuns to transfer the revered body of St. Werburga from Hanbury to the safe-keeping of Chester. But Chester itself suffered later from these ruthless invaders, and the nunnery, which had been founded to watch over the sainted remains, after unhappy experiences, was re-edified by Æthelfleda, the "Lady of the Mercians," for secular canons, and later endowed more amply by King Edgar, who, by a charter dated 958, granted to it certain lands. A century later, 1057, the buildings were extensively repaired by Leofric of Mercia, who bestowed upon the community additional privileges.

Chester could boast of a much older building in St. John's-without-the-walls, if the tradition which ascribes its foundation to King Æthelred in 689 has any ground of truth. St. John's was the scene of the great pageant when it was visited in solemn pomp and ceremony by King Edgar the Peace-giver, in 960, in his imperial progress round Britain, after being rowed from his palace on the Dee by the eight vassal kings, who there did homage to him. St. John's, too, was repaired and enriched by Leofric of Mercia, and still

later became the cathedral of Peter, the first Norman bishop of Mercia, who built the nave and tower piers. Some few miles away, in the same county, but several years earlier, in a solitary, swampy district, another bishop had taken refuge from the marauding Danes, Plegmund, "Alfred's archbishop," who has given his name to Plegmundstall.

The dedication of a church in Chester to St. Olave points to a settlement of Danes at Chester itself. This church stands, as might be expected for a church built by the roving Danes, not far from the river-bank, and outside what has been considered by some to be the line of the original Roman wall before the circuit of the city was extended by Æthelfleda.[1]

[1] The following list of ancient dedications will perhaps throw light upon the early establishment of Christianity in Cheshire: *St. Leonard* at Warmingham and Taxal; *St. Helen* at Tarporley and Witton; *St. Bridget* at West Kirby and Chester; *St. Martin*, Chester; *St. Oswald*, Bidston, Backford, Chester, Peover Lower, Malpas, Worleston, Brereton; *St. Hilary*, Wallasey; *St. Wilfrid*, Grappenhall, Davenham, Mobberly, Northenden; *St. Boniface*, Bunbury; *St. Chad*, Farndon, Tushingham, Over, Wybunbury, Chadkirk, Handforth; *St. Edith*, Shocklach; *St. Alban*, Tattenhall; *St. David*, Wettenhall; *St. Lawrence*, Frodsham, Over Peover, Alderley, Stoak; *St. Werburgh*, Warburton and Chester.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER I

Dr. Ormerod, in a valuable note in his *History of Chester* (vol. i. 1), gives the names of a large number of ancient churches in Cheshire, omitted in Domesday. "In Bochelau hundred, *Bowdon* had a church and a priest; *Lymme* had a church divided as at present into moieties, and one priest; and 'Lege,' High Leigh, had a priest; the last of these appears to be the same foundation with the present *Rostherne*. The later churches are *Mobberley* (erected on a part of Aldford fee temp. Johan.), which belonged to the same Saxon proprietor with a part of 'Lege,' and probably taken out of that parish; *Ashton*, in the fee of the barons of Dunham Massey, existing temp. Ed. I.

"In Tunendune hundred no church is mentioned, but *Budworth* had a priest; *Runcorn* is altogether passed over, but its church was in existence in the reign of the Conqueror. *Groppenhall* church existed temp. Hen. III.

"In Riseton hundred a priest is mentioned at *Bunbury*. No notice is taken of an ecclesiastical establishment at *Tarporley* or *Tarvin*.

"In Roelau hundred *Frodsham* had a church, and *Weverham* a church and a priest. *Ince* was probably considered a chapel of the ancient church which merged in the establishment of the Chester canons.

"In Dudestan hundred *Farndon* had a church and two priests, one of whom doubtless related to the moiety of that manor, which subsequently constituted the vill of Aldford. The possession of Earl Edwin may account for the omission of a church at Malpas, but there can be little doubt of its having then existed, and of its having been the mother church of *Shocklach*, *Tilston*, *Harthill*, as well as of Christleton.

Westward of Malpas lie *Coddington*, *Waverton*, *Tattenhall*, and *Handley*, none of which are noticed in Domesday, but the churches of the three first were granted to Chester Abbey before 1093. *Handley* was given to the same abbey, temp. Rich. I. *Guilden Sutton* and Plemondstall were probably dependent on St. John's Church at the Conquest, and had churches built by the dean and chapter of that collegiate establishment as population advanced. *Thornton le Moors*, in Dudestan, had a church and priest, and *Over*, from which *Little Budworth* and *Whitegate* were taken out, was probably part of the great Saxon parish of Budworth. It occurs in a charter of Randle II.

"In Atiscros hundred (as far as the present Cheshire is concerned) no church is noticed in Domesday, but *Dodleston* was erected by the Boydells on land contiguous to the remaining earthworks of their Norman fortress, and occurs temp. Ric. I.

"In Wilaveston hundred Woodchurch, Bebington, Neston, and Bromborough (Estham) had each severally a priest, and, on the subdivision of the last vill, we have evidence of the *new* church, founded in that part of the manor which retained the name of the Saxon vill, being long called *capella* de Estham.

"*Stoke* is proved to have been a dependency of the ancient parish church merged in the house of the secular canons at Chester, and *Shotwick* was probably similarly circumstanced. *Kirkby* is omitted in Domesday, but immediately after that survey Robert de Rodelent grants it, with its two churches (the other of which was most probably Hilbree), to the Abbey of Utica.

"In Mildestvie hundred were *Davenham*, which had a church and priest, and probably included *Warmincham*, where a church was built by the Mainwarings.

"*Newton*, afterwards removed to the contiguous vill of *Middlewich*, supplied with a church and priest.

"*Sandbach*, also having a church and priest.

"*Astbury*, which had a priest.

"In Warmundestrow hundred *Acton* had two priests, *Barthomley* one, *Wybunbury* a church and priest.

"In Hamestan hundred *Stockport* and *Prestbury* appear to have been heads of great Saxon parishes, but to have been destroyed by the Norman invaders.

"*Cheadle* and *Wilmslow* were erected on lands separated from the demesne of Earl Edwin in the hundred, and *Mottram Longdendale* among the wastes and forests of the eastern verge of the country."

CHAPTER II

Benedictine foundations—St. Werburgh's Abbey—St. Mary's Nunnery, Chester—Birkenhead Priory—Hospitals for lepers and the infirm—"Hilbre Light"—Austin canons—Cistercian foundations at Stanlawe and Whalley, Combermere, Pulton, and Furness—Architecture of the religious houses.

In the Norman period we find great and widespread activity in building churches, founding monasteries for the religious-minded, and hospitals for the sick and infirm. While the Conqueror found it necessary to hold by the sword what the sword had won, and erect strong castles to keep in subjection the people who had resisted his rule with such desperate valour, and nowhere more stubbornly than in Cheshire, he was by no means loath, with the religious feeling so characteristic of his race, to employ spiritual influence to attach the conquered nation to his throne.

The castles built by himself or by his followers were provided with chapels for the garrisons within, and under the very shadow of the Norman keeps were built grand and stately churches, chiefly for the Norman dependants outside, and for those English who chose to join in the more elaborate worship there introduced. Chester, the last city in England to hold

out for the Saxon king, and with the capture of which William completed the conquest of England, was by no means an exception.

The "Ministers' Accounts" of 13 Edward I. refer to a large and a small chapel in the castle of Chester, and though the chapel still existing in the so-called Julian tower was probably erected not earlier than 1237, there must have been in the castle (enlarged and strengthened as it was by the Conqueror) left by Æthelfleda a chapel of some kind; while hard by, just without the circuit of the castle wall, but within the castle fee, was built St. Mary's de Castro, and given by the Norman earl, Randle Gernons (1128—1155), to the Abbey of St. Werburgh.

In addition to the noble foundation of St. John's-without-the-walls, which was selected by at least one bishop as his cathedral church, within the walls the rival church of St. Werburgh, under the fostering care of successive earls, was to attain to great dignity and magnificence. After suffering like other ecclesiastical foundations in Cheshire and Lancashire during the troubled Danish period, it was re-edified by Æthelfleda. Large endowments and valuable privileges were conferred on it by King Edgar in 958, and by Leofric of Mercia in 1057; and when Domesday was compiled the canons held, besides hides in several hundreds of Cheshire, thirteen houses in Chester itself, free of tax—one for the warden or head of the community, the rest for the canons. These thirteen would be the few clerks (*pauculi clerici*) who, according to William of Malmesbury, were ejected by Hugh Lupus in 1093 on the advice of Anselm, when he established in their

stead an abbot and convent of the Benedictine rule, appointing Anselm's own chaplain, Richard, as first abbot. The grants made to St. Werburgh's by the great Norman earl, with the express sanction of King William,[1] and by his barons, illustrate the vicious system of appropriation to which patrons commonly had recourse when they wished to be generous to a favourite community, the services of these churches being performed by monks sent out from the abbey, and the canons caring more about calling in the offerings of the faithful than maintaining the spiritual relationship. The list of churches granted to the monastery is a long one:—Bruera, Weston, Eston, Daneford, Eastham, Neston, Eston in Derbyshire, Tattenhall, Christelton, Clinton, Waverton Chapel, Northenden, besides several in Wales, Holywell, etc.

There were given in addition a number of manors, with large immunities and exemptions from the public services so numerous and burdensome in that age, such as attendance at the numerous courts and payments of various tallages.

Earl Hugh further allowed the principal barons to give tracts of land, and the inferior lords added various gifts according to their ability, and after death a third of their substance. Amongst the barons, knights, and others who contended with one another in a rivalry of generous benefactions are William Malbanc, Robert Fitz-Hugh, Hugh and Ralph Fitz-Norman, Richard de Vernon of Shipbrook, Richard de Rullos, Billcheld wife of Baldric, Ralph Venator (the huntsman), Hugh

[1] *Rege Willielmo concedente* occurs more than once in the charter.

de Mara, Robert Fitz-Serlo, Nigel de Burceio, Ralph Fitz-Ermuin and his wife Claricia, Robert de Tremons, Waeceln, nephew of Walter de Vernon, Suard Geoffrey de Sartes, Richard de Mesnilwarin, and Robert Putrel.

Later, in the time of Earl Richard, valuable grants were made by William the Constable, Hugh Fitz-Norman, Richard de Praers, Hamo de Macy, and Roesia wife of Pigot, Roger de Mesnilguarin, Bourel, Herbert Wombasarius, Richard the Butler, Roger de St. Martin, William de Punterleya, and Hugh de Vernon. In the Confirmation Charter of Earl Randle Meschines, mention is made of gifts by his brother, William Meschines of Dissard Church ; by Matthew de Ruelent of Thurstanestone Church ; by Hugh Fitz-Osbert ; by Leticia de Malpas, and William Fitz-Andrew, several of the grants being made when they themselves or a son took the cowl and joined the Brotherhood.[1] The tenure in some cases is stated to be by an ear of corn, or a knife, laid annually upon the high altar, and the charters themselves were placed there by the earl in person with all solemnity in the presence of his barons and knights.

This solemn dedication of property to the service of God and to pious uses did not prevent attempts later on to wrest from the abbey some of their valuable possessions. Domesday records that after the arrival of the Normans the canons of St. Werburgh's had to suffer from violent usurpation. A part of Staney was one of the possessions of the monastery, but was retained by the earl. One of the three hides of land

[1] Cum vellet monachus fieri, dedit cum filio suo monacho facto.

at Burwardeslei held of Earl Hugh by Robert Fitz-Hugh had been taken away, the reeves of Earls Edwin and Morcar having sold it to one Ravechel. These lands Earl Hugh, in his charter, confirms to the monastery. Earl Hugh's own son, Richard, unlike his father and very possibly after the death of his father's friend, Richard, Anselm's chaplain, was said to have threatened to wrest Saighton Grange from the abbot if he returned safe from his voyage to Normandy, and his death by drowning was regarded by the Brethren as a just judgment upon his impious greed. Earl Randle Gernons acknowledges that he has injured St. Werburgh, for in his charter he grants, as a satisfaction for the evils done by him to it, the manors of Eastham and Brunsburgh.[1]

A century later, in 1250, Roger de Montalt, justiciary of Chester, took advantage of his powerful office to recover from the abbey the manors of Lawton and Goosetrey, and the churches of Bruera, Neston, and Coddington, which had been given by his ancestors, the Barons of Montalt. He took possession of Neston church with an armed force, and presented a relative, Ralph de Montalt, clerk, to the living. Afterwards he restored the church, but only after extorting from the monastery the manors of Bretton and Lea, Spoune chapel, and forcing them to resign all the tenth of Hawarden to the rector, and pensioning Ralph de Montalt. The Chronicle of St. Werburgh is careful to record as a warning to other intending spoilers of the Church the judgments of Heaven on Roger de Montalt. His eldest son died within fifteen

[1] Notum est vobis quod multum forefeci rebus S. Werburge.

days after the compromise, and Roger himself died in want, his burial-place remaining unknown to the common people.

Roger Venables, Baron of Kinderton, in 1259 made (as Sir William Venables previously in 1188) a similar attempt to recover Astbury, which Gilbert de Venables had given. He succeeded, but died within twelve months by a miserable death; and the right of presentation was contested by the abbot before Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, Justice of Chester (13 Ric. II.), and decided finally in favour of the abbey. Once more in Edward I.'s reign, Philip Burnel (nephew of the great Chancellor Robert Burnel) and his wife Isabella, baroness of Malpas, attempted to recover the manors of Saighton, Huntington, Cheveley, and Boughton, held by the secular canons before the Conquest. These manors were especially valuable from their contiguity to Chester. Abbot Simon of Whitchurch was able, after a protracted contest, to win his case, but at the cost of a bond of £200, which St. Werburgh's Chartulary asserts to have been extorted by the unjust influence of the Chancellor. It is quite possible that the abbot himself owed his success in part to the favour in which he was held by King Edward, and though the £200 fine was part of a corrupt bargain, at least one abbot (Thomas de Newport, 1363—1384) was found guilty of seeking to win over members of a jury by bribes. In the case of Abbot Simon, the payment of the fine was compounded for by the provision of two chaplains to pray for the soul of Philip Burnel.

Besides these manors in various parts of Cheshire,

especially in the Wirral peninsula, and the patronage of valuable rectories, the abbey acquired property in Chester itself, amounting to one-fourth part of the city, as well as a considerable tract of the most desirable property in the immediate neighbourhood, forming an almost unbroken ring round the city. For instance, Earl Hugh and his countess, Ermentrude, gave the entire street from the Northgate to the abbey Church, a place for one mill at Dee Bridge, and the tithe, not only of corn, but also of chickens and calves, pigs and lambs, butter and cheese, etc. To this his son, Earl Richard, added other lands at the Northgate, the tithe of all salmon taken at the bridge, site for a mill below the bridge, and the tithe of the Earl's mill above it.

A most valuable privilege granted was that of taking toll and all the profits at the annual fair held in the open space before the abbey gate. This privilege had its origin in the fact that the churchyard and the precincts of the abbey were perhaps the only places of safety where, in those rude times, traders could with any security expose their wares and the inhabitants could meet and deal with one another without the risk of quarrel and bloodshed. The fair commenced on the vigil of St. Werburgh's Feast,[1] and continued for three whole days. To secure absolute freedom from interference with the success of the fair, even known malefactors were at liberty to come and trade or make their purchases, and were free from arrest as long as the fair lasted, pro-

[1] *Ab hora nona vigilie Virginis in estate usque ad noctem tercii dici sequentis.*

vided they were guilty of no new offence. This lucrative privilege (including the fines for all forfeitures in pleas which had to be taken into the Abbot's Court), though confirmed by successive earls, was disputed in later years by the civic authorities as largely diminishing the profits of the resident traders. Such a demur will not appear unreasonable, when we observe that the abbot claimed that during the continuance of the fair all articles for sale should be exposed in the street near the abbey, and nowhere else. He also claimed to have the providing and letting of all the booths used by the traders.

These booths were of the rudest description, covered with reeds gathered by special permission on marsh-land belonging to Stanlawe Abbey. It may be stated here, though a little in anticipation of the ordinary history, that the mayor and citizens long disputed these claims, contending that they were at liberty to sell goods anywhere else in the city during the fair as they pleased. A final agreement was come to in 1288 (17 Ed. I.), before Reginald de Grey, the Justice, the Prior of Birkenhead, Ralph de Vernun, and others, that the citizens should hold a fair and erect booths and stalls yearly at fair time, in the place extending from the gate of the cemetery to the abbot's houses under the cemetery wall, and in other parts. The stalls were to be erected so as not to interfere with access to the abbey buildings, and were to be removed immediately after the end of the fair. The abbot in turn agreed that the convent should not let any of their stalls or booths to any traders in the city as long as the stalls erected by the citizens remained unlet,

but should let to foreign traders, and even to the city traders, if the booths erected by the citizens were insufficient. In 1509, on a much more extended claim, it was determined that the abbot was not to hold St. Werburgh's fair or any other fair.

Another privilege upon which the Abbey of St. Werburgh's prided itself was that it was not subject to any other abbey, and like other religious communities of the time, it aimed at being free from episcopal visitation, preferring the Bishop of Rome "as being a bishop of greater dignity," and what was more important, "at a greater distance." The history of the abbey shows that this privilege or exemption was not always maintained, for in 1362 the Abbot of St. Alban's, the provincial president of the Benedictine Order, the Prior of Coventry, and the Sub-prior of St. Alban's visited St. Werburgh's as commissioners deputed by the Abbot of Evesham to inquire into the charges brought against Abbot Richard Seynesbury. The abbot, to avoid the scrutiny, resigned to the Pope. Abbot William de Bebyngton in 1345 obtained the mitre, and the following year exemption from the bishop's visitation, but this exemption was annulled by Pope Urban in 1363. Pope Clement III. (1187—1191), in his bull confirming the ecclesiastical possessions, also exempts St. Werburgh's from the penalties of a general interdict. Thus it was that in King John's reign, while in the rest of the Palatinate of Chester the inhabitants were excluded from visible communion with God, the voice of prayer and praise was hushed in all the churches, all sacred offices except baptism and the sacrament to the dying with-

held, the Abbey Church had the special privilege of continuing her services, though even here no bell was to ring, and the sacred offices were to be performed in an undertone. The shrine of St. Werburgh was held in the highest reverence, and, at more than one crisis in the history of Chester, proved of great service. Thus, in 1180, we are told in the life of St. Werburgh, when a terrible fire raged—

> "Piteously wasting hous, chambre and hall,
> Many riall places fell adowne that day,
> Riche marchauntes houses brought to distruction,
> Churches and Chapells went to great decay,
> That tyme was brent the more part of the town,"—

the abbot and convent of St. Werburgh

> "Took the holy shryne in prayer and devocion;
> Syngynge the letanie bare it in procession,
> Compassing the fyre in every strete and place."

The fire was stopped, and the whole body of citizens went in procession to join in solemn thanksgiving at the shrine of the Holy Maiden.

The abbot held a court of his own, at which his tenants and dependants were bound to appear and render suit and service, and to which they were required to bring their pleas. Earl Randle de Meschines (1120—1128) states in his charter, that to set an example to his successors, he came himself in person with one plea into the Abbot's Court, hearing and receiving a decision, not from his own judges, but from the abbot's judges, as a mark of respect for St. Werburgh.[1] This court was held at St. Thomas's, on

[1] *Ut in omnibus haberet beata Wereburga jus suæ dignitatis imperpetuum.*

the south side of the abbey gate. This privilege was abused by one abbot, Thomas de Newport, who was indicted (46 Ed. III.) for having during twelve years past compelled persons who were not his tenants to appear at his court, and punished them there for certain offences and debts. The question of jurisdiction of the abbey as an independent soke, after having been a sore grievance to the city authorities for many years, was raised formally in 1509, and the right of holding a court limited to cases relating to the abbey tenants and offences committed within the abbey precincts. Some of the terms of the final award made by the arbitrators are worth quoting, as throwing light upon the relations between the abbey and the citizens in mediæval times.[1] The reduction of power, of which

[1] Aug. 7, 1 Henry 8, 1509. Award between Abbot and City of Chester (Harl. MS. 1989, fol. 454).

Arbitrators chosen—Sir Charles Booth, Sir Wm. Uvedall, Kts., George Bromley Esq., and Anthony Fitzherbert, Sarjant at law, and Wm. Rudell, the quene's attorney.

1. St. Watburge fair or any other fayre court should not thenceforth be kept by abbot.

2. Abbot to keep all other courts within precincts of monasterie in manner as formerlie they have beene accustomed.

3. The abbot nor any monk should be arrested in the precincts of monasterie for any offence.

4. Abbot's servants or ministers not to be arrested within precincts except for treason, murder, felony, or debt.

5. Abbot's servants &c. should come to answer any plaint or suit entered before the major or sheriffes of Chester within xxiiii houres after they shall be sent for by the major or sheriffes, and in default of their appearance to be attached in the monastery.

6. Upon any affray committed by any inhabitants in monastery in the city, offender being sent for before the major, shall be sent to him. If he come not within 24 hours, to be attached in monastery.

this award is indirect evidence, would not have been made had not the power and influence of the mayor

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7. Abbot to have all forfeitures for murders and felonies done in monastery, and a felons goods beinge within precincte of monastery at time of felonie done, and moietie of all felons goods in Northgate Street without the Northgate.

8. Maior shall heare and determine all murders and felonies done within precinct of monasterie.

9. Coroners of city should view bodies slain or persons who die suddenly by misfortune in the precincts of the monasterie, and to inquire thereof out of the precincts of the monastery or in the city: take abjuration of persons taking sanctuarie in monasterie, and if they refuse to abjure and to confesse felonie, then to be used according to law by coroners and other officers of city.

10. All the abbots' tenants in Northgate strete shall beare scott and lott with citie and to have the libertie that other citizens have.

11. The abbot's officer or constable may attach any for breach of peace without Northgate and then committ to prison within the great westgate of monastery to be punished according to law, provided that if the major doe send to abbott for the said prisoner that then he shall be delivered without delay, to be by the major ordered according to law. The major may attach any for breach of peace in Northgate strete and commit them to common gaole of citie, there to remaine during pleasure of maior.

12. Abbot's tenants in Northgate strete shall sue all personal actions before major at their pleasure and abbot to have half of all fines and amerciaments.

13. Abbot's tenants may sue in abbot's court if they please.

14. Abbot shall have his Leete and all things thereto belonging, in Northgate strete except affrays, bloodwipes, breach of peace and assize of bread and ale which the major shall punish and abbot to have half fines.

15. Limits of monastery should begin at great westgate thereof, within the same gate, and soe following within the said wall of the monasterie, northward, nigh unto the town wall of the city, and so following within town wall unto the postern

and aldermen been slowly but surely growing, while that of the abbot, once the greatest authority after the earl, had been as surely declining.

The great importance of the Abbey of St. Werburgh is further shown in the officers who attended on the Lord Abbot. He had for his Seneschal in the first year of Henry VIII.'s reign no less a person than the Earl of Derby, who, down to the Dissolution, was willing to accept a salary of 40*s*. The Lord of Burwardesley held his manor as the Abbot's Champion,

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in the same wall going into a place called caleyard or convent garden, accordinge to the walls and ditches of the same: and so to returne again to the said postern, and from thence following within said towne wall southward toward the Estgate streete against the end of a stone wall that abutteth nigh upon St. Werburge lane, that lyeth from the abbey toward the Eastgate strete so from the stile, following within the ould wall that abutteth nigh upon the said town wall, unto the Church Stile unto the west end of the new Church stile, at the west ende of the new Church, including the newe houses built at the same because they be inhabited by citizens haveinge theire entrie and regresse unto and from the said houses towards the streete of the saide citie, and soe following by the saide newe houses northward within the wall of the said monastery, unto the saide greate westgate, where the limitts began. Provided that the limitts &c. be not hurtfull nor to the damage of the abbot &c. for the ould precincts as appeareth by the ould walls and divers compositions, nor prejudiciall to the Mayor &c.

16. And provided that the mayor and citizens shall have libertie to carrie stones and leade or other things necessary within the precincts of the monasterie for to make reparacion or new buildings by the walls of the citie or for defence or safegarde of the same citie.

17. Copy of estreates of all amerciaments everie yeare shall be delivered to the parson of St. Peeters, for use of the abbot, together with half of money collected by said estreates.

and was bound on occasion to stand forward in person or by his Seneschal in the Abbot's Court, and do battle in defence of the convent rights and claims. The Master-Cook was, of course, an important official in an abbey so well known for the lavish hospitality exercised by successive abbots, who devoted the endowments of rectories and lands, the tithes of mills, etc., to the maintenance of kitchen and pantry. Not only did they entertain kings and archbishops on the occasion of their visiting and passing through Chester, but great nobles, brother abbots, besides the inferior clergy and ordinary wayfarers, were constantly guests at St. Werburgh's, and entertained in most generous fashion.[1]

There would be naturally in connection with such a well-endowed kitchen many valuable perquisites, and hence it is not surprising to find the Master-Cook in possession of a valuable estate, the greater part of the township of Lea-by-Backford, and rich perquisites, which are detailed in a deed of covenant recorded in the Chartulary. Amongst these perquisites are the tails of salmon and basse, the heads and tails of other fish, sundry portions of beef and pork, two gallons of beer a day, and all the dripping. The abbot, too, had his manor-houses of Saighton and Ince, to which he would make from time to time stately progress,

[1] Thus Walter Pynchbeke, the tenth abbot (1228—1240), appropriated the tithes of Church Shotwick Rectory to the support of the kitchen, and his successor, Roger Frend (1240—1249), further appropriated the Chapel of Wervin to the same purpose. Abbot Simon of Whitchurch also devoted large sums to the refectory and kitchen.

and which he was allowed by special permission to fortify strongly. About the former of these manor-houses was a noble park of a thousand acres, and he had extensive warrens elsewhere. The earlier abbots had the privilege of hunting in the royal forests, and several haunches of venison were sent annually to the abbey kitchen by the King's order.

The present cathedral is the work of successive abbots spread over a long series of years. The original buildings of the abbey had at the end of the twelfth century fallen into grievous disrepair, the greater part of the church being in ruins when Geoffrey succeeded as seventh abbot in 1194. At that date the rebuilding had proceeded no further than the choir, owing to want of money. The inundations of the sea in the Wirral peninsula, and the no less disastrous incursions of the Welsh, had considerably impoverished the convent. Under his successor, Abbot Hugh Grylle, the waste places were restored and additional buildings erected, and about 1240—1249 the chapter-house was rebuilt on a larger scale. It was during the abbacy of the spirited Simon of Whitchurch, Edward I.'s favourite, that the east arm of the Abbey Church and the beautiful Lady Chapel were built. His namesake, Simon of Ripley, in 1485, set about finishing the work commenced a century before by Richard de Seynesbury, and rebuilt the upper part of the nave and the south transept. His successor, John Birchenshaw, who had such unpleasant relations with the civic authorities in 1508, built up the west front and laid the foundations of the west tower.

The following list of abbots will be useful :—

1. Richard, Anselm's chaplain, 1093—1117.
   Vacancy for four years.
2. William, 1121—1140.
3. Ralph, 1141—1157.
4. Robert Fitz-Nigel, 1157—1174.
5. Robert, 1174—1184.
   Abbey taken by King and committed to Thomas de Heusseburne.
6. Robert de Hastings, 1185 ; deposed, 1194.
7. Geoffrey, 1194—1208.
8. Hugh Grylle, 1208—1226.
9. William Marmion, 1226—1228.
10. Walter Pynchbeke, 1228—1240.
11. Roger Frend, 1240—1249.
12. Thomas Capenhurst, 1249—1265.
13. Simon of Whitchurch (de Albo Monasterio), 1265—Feb. 22, 1290.
    King retains Abbey revenues for two years.
14. Thomas de Burchelles,[1] 1291—1324.
15. William de Bebyngton (Byninglon), 1324—1349.
16. Richard de Seynesbury, 1349 ; resigned, 1362.
17. Thomas de Newport, 1363—1385.
18. William de Mershton, 1385—1386.
19. Henry de Sutton, 1386—1413.
20. Thomas de Eardesley,[2] 1413—1435.
21. John Salghall, 1435—1453.
22. Richard Oldon,[3] 1453—1485.
23. Simon Ripley, 1485—1493.

[1] de Lythelas in *Chronicle of St. Werburgh*.
[2] Variously spelt Yerdesley, Erdeley, Ordeley.
[3] Variously spelt Oldham, Oldom.

24. John Birchenshaw, 1493; deprived, 1529.
25. } Thomas Hyphile, } abbots in interval.
26. } Thomas Marshall, }
27. Thomas Clarke, last abbot, 1538. Dissolution.

Of these, the sixth abbot, Robert de Hastings, although his election had been approved by King Henry and Archbishop Baldwin, was unfortunate enough to incur the hostility of the great Earl of Chester, Randle Blundeville, who after a long controversy succeeded in procuring his deposition in favour of Geoffrey. The twelfth abbot, Thomas de Capenhurst (1249—1265), who belonged to the family of the mesne-lords of Capenhurst, was engaged in disputes with the powerful nobles, Roger de Montalt and Roger de Venables, in defence of the abbey's possessions. Notices of the remaining abbots must be deferred to a later chapter.

The Benedictine Order had a nunnery in Chester dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, but founded much later than the Benedictine abbey of St. Werburgh, certainly not earlier than the time of Earl Randle Gernons (1128—1153). This convent also had extensive privileges and exemptions, and was allowed to hold its own court. The property conferred upon it included two advowsons of rectories in Wales, Llanbeblig (Carnarvon) in Carnarvonshire,[1] North Wales, and Llangathen in Carmarthenshire, South Wales.

Of the many houses of shelter, which mediæval piety

[1] The patronage of the Vicarage of Llanbeblig is at present held by the Bishop of Chester.

originated, and which were founded during the period under consideration, that of St. John the Baptist without the Northgate was founded and liberally endowed by Randle Blundeville for the sustentation of poor and "silly" persons, thirteen in number, who were ministered to by three chaplains. The brethren and sisters had exemption from service on juries, customs, and assize of bread, as well as other privileges. At the other end of the city, at Boughton, was St. Giles Hospital for lepers, founded by the same earl. The hospital, built, for sanitary reasons, outside the city, was conveniently situated for appealing to the charity of those entering Chester from the east. In addition to this chance of charity, the lepers were allowed for their support certain tolls from every article of food, and every other merchandise carried for sale in Chester market, one or more handfuls.

The King frequently exercised his right to demand admission for lepers whom he had appointed. Such institutions were much needed. "The unhealthy dwellings of the period, the coarse swillings of bad fermented liquor, the poor and unwholesome food, produced a continual crop of horrible skin-diseases, which required the separation of the patient and the strenuous help of devoted hands." It is noteworthy that these hospitals were not so common in Cheshire and Lancashire as in other parts of England. At Bebington was one, referred to in a record of 11 Edward I., the brethren being permitted to enclose within a small ditch and fence five acres of forest land belonging to their own waste within the limits of the Wirral Forest.

Another hospital for lazars at Nantwich is mentioned as having a chapel dedicated to St. Laurence : this is in addition to an ancient hospital dedicated to St. Nicholas, supposed to have stood in or near Hospital Street, so called from it.

Only one hospital for lepers is recorded as having existed throughout the extensive but thinly-populated district of Lancashire. This is at Lancaster itself, dedicated to St. Leonard (the usual dedication in other counties), for a master chaplain and nine poor persons, whereof three were to be lepers. It was founded by King John while Earl of Moreton, and in the Close Rolls of 4 Henry III., permission is given to the leprous brethren to have pasture for animals in the royal forest of Loundesdale, as well as wood for fuel and timber for building purposes. At Cokersand, which was first an hermitage, there was, later, a hospital for infirm brethren under a prior, subject to the Abbey of Leicester, and endowed chiefly by William of Lancaster, Baron of Kendal. In 1190 this foundation was changed into an Abbey of Premonstratensian Canons, which at the time of the Dissolution reckoned amongst their number twenty-two religious with fifty-seven servants.

Other hospitals, for the sick and infirm but not for lepers, founded during this period are two with which the name of Alexander de Stavenby, the learned Bishop of Lichfield, is connected. His episcopate (1224—1238) is noteworthy for the "Coming of the Friars," whom he favoured, and the institution of chantries. He endowed a hospital, dedicated to St. Andrew, at Tarvin, out of the tithes of the parish

church, and another at Denwall, also dedicated to St. Andrew, with the church of Burton. When Bishop Smyth (1492—1496) turned out the Austin Canons of St. John's Priory, and reconstituted the foundation as a hospital for aged men, the revenues of Denwall with the rectory of Burton were appropriated to it.

There was at Hilbre (variously called Hildeburgh eye, Hillebyri) a church even in Saxon times, and in a charter of William the Conqueror, granted 1081 to the Abbey of St. Ebrulf in Normandy, the church of Hilbre is mentioned as previously given to this convent (together with that of West Kirby) by Robert de Rothelen (Rhuddlan). Leland speaks of "a cell of monks of Chestre and a pilgrimage of our Ladye of Hilbyri." A light was maintained at the shrine from a very early period, to which in the reign of Henry III., John Scot, Earl of Chester, contributed ten shillings per annum. This payment continued to be entered in the Ministers' Accounts in Edward III.'s reign, as paid annually to the Abbey of St. Werburgh for maintaining the light. The history of the oratory is connected with an interesting incident in the life of one of the Norman Earls of Chester. Earl Richard, Hugh Lupus's son, was making a pilgrimage to St. Winifred's Well, when he was attacked by a strong body of the Welsh, and driven to seek refuge in the Abbey of Basingwerk, a mile nearer the coast. He sent off a hurried message to his constable, William Fitz Nigell, to come to his succour with as large a force as possible. The constable marched forthwith to Hilbre, intending to take ship there across the estuary. But no ships were to be found, and in his "extreme necessity" he

"called to hym a monke, there dwellynge contemplatyve,

> Required hym for counsayle and prayer for his charite.
> The monke exhorted hym to knele upon his kne,
> Humblie to beseke Werburge his patronesse
> For helpe and remedy in such great distresse."

This help was surely granted, for the saint, Bradshaw assures us, miraculously raised new sandbanks in the estuary, over which the constable marched to the relief of his lord,

> "And where the host passed over betwixt bondes
> To this day been called the Constable sondes."

It is no matter of surprise that the light before the holy shrine should have been gratefully maintained by the rescued Earl's successors.

Another Benedictine foundation was at Birkenhead, where a priory for sixteen monks, dedicated to St. James, was established in 1150 by Hamon de Masci, third Baron of Dunham Massey. He endowed it with the valuable manors of Moreton, Claughton, Tranmere, Over Bebington, Salghal Massey, the rectories of Bidston and Backford, and one moiety of Wallasey, the other belonging to St. Werburgh's. In addition to the privileges of common pasture and turbary, fishing rights, exemption from the jurisdiction of foresters, and from suits in the Court of the Hundred of Wirral, as well as the unsatisfactory right to wreckage, the Birkenhead monastery had the monopoly of the ferry between Birkenhead and Liverpool, and the providing of accommodation and provisions for passengers. The tolls exacted were considered exorbitant at the time,

being *2d.* for each horseman, a man and his bundle *1d.*, a farthing for a mere passenger on foot, except on Saturday, market day at Liverpool, when double the toll was required.

A still earlier priory is that of St. Mary at Lancaster, one of the alien priories, founded by Roger, Earl of Poictiers, 1094. He made it a cell to St. Martin of Sayes in Normandy, endowing it with the churches of Lancaster, Heysam, Cotgreave, and Pulton le Fylde, and the moiety of Preston, Kirkham, and Bolton. Earl Randle Blundeville confirmed these gifts, and other patrons subsequently added the advowsons of Croston and Eccleston.

To the same order belonged the Abbey of Penwortham, founded by Warin de Bussell in William the Conqueror's reign, and made a cell to Evesham. The churches of Penwortham, Farington, Leiland, and Northmeoles were appropriated to it. Lytham was made a cell to the Priory of Durham in Richard I.'s reign.

Several foundations of Austin or Black Canons were established in Cheshire and Lancashire chiefly in the reign of Henry II. These canons were parish priests living together under monastic rules, and observing the canonical hours of service. Such was the order settled by William Fitz Nigel first at Runcorn in 1133, and then transferred by his son William to Norton in King Stephen's reign. The first body of canons established at Norton in all probability came from Nostell, the first house of the order founded in England. The connection between the two houses is the more probable, as the older foundation owned the

neighbouring church of Winwick. The dedication of Norton Priory was to St. Christopher, which, in view of the legend, and the fact that the priory buildings looked out upon a great and stormy river, was most appropriate. The gigantic figure of the saint was placed under a canopy of stone (as if part of the original house) in the front of the house, and looking towards the river. The convent claimed, under the charters of Henry III. and Randle Blundeville's, exemption from all aids, gelds, and works in castles, freedom from tolls of salt, pannage, and customs. The priory became an abbey in the reign of Henry VI. The story of the troublous end of the last abbot, in connection with the "Pilgrimage of Grace," will be told in a subsequent chapter.

Mobberley Priory of Canons Regular of St. Augustine, was founded by Patrick de Mobberley about 1206, at the beginning of King John's reign. The Prior of Macclesfield is stated by Bishop Gastrell to have been one of the temporal barons subject to Hugh Lupus, Earl of Chester.

In Lancashire the Austin Canons had a priory at Conishead or Conyngeshead, near Ulverstone, built by Gamil de Penington in the reign of Henry II. upon the soil and by the encouragement of William of Lancaster, Baron of Kendal, who was a great benefactor to it. The priory was involved in a dispute with Furness Abbey about its patronage, the decision being in favour of the latter, and the number of the monks then reduced to thirteen. Whitaker observes that "the situation of the priory was most useful for the purposes of hospitality, and that many a shivering

and half-drowned adventurer over the sands would mourn the time when these hospitable doors were closed for ever against distress and want. The situation is beautiful, but in no degree characteristic of the features which were usually chosen for monastic retirement. For here is no deep valley, no gloomy seclusion from the cheerful views of surrounding nature, but a spacious and fertile domain, varied by alternate elevations and depressions, together with woods of fine growth and great extent, affording partial views of the great bay of Morecambe, and the mountains which surround it."

It is quite characteristic of the ascetic Cistercians, whose white robes matched well the marvellous self-denial and purity of their lives, that they should have selected the wilder districts of Cheshire and Lancashire for their settlement. This was the case with STANLAWE ABBEY, founded by John, Constable of Chester, and Baron of Halton, in 1178, on the eve of his departure for the Holy Land. "Placed on a low rock at the confluence of the Gowy and the Mersey, in one of the most barren spots in Cheshire, it was a fitting place for the followers of those devoted men who looked on the loneliness and sterility of Citeaux as its chief recommendation." The situation was by no means a pleasant one. Even at the present day, observes Dr. Ormerod, it is difficult to select in Cheshire a scene of more comfortless desolation than this cheerless marsh; barely fenced from the waters by embankments on the north; shut out by naked knolls from the fairer country which spreads along the feet of the forest hills on the south-east; and ap-

proached by one miserable trackway of mud; whilst every road that leads to the haunts of men seems to diverge in its course as it approaches the Locus Benedictus of Stanlawe. Such was the name by which the stern Constable of Chester directed the Cistercian foundation to be called. He endowed it with the manors of Aston and Staneye. Another Constable of Chester, Roger, who had succeeded to the immense possessions of the De Lascys, bestowed upon it the advowson of Rochdale and various lands. Other members of the same family in succession added the advowsons of Blackburn, Eccles, and lastly the valuable church of Whalley, which was given by the great Henry de Lascy, Earl of Lincoln. Numerous grants of land in Cheshire, and especially Lancashire, were made by the inferior landowners.

With this increase of wealthy possessions the brethren seem to have begun to long for a pleasanter neighbourhood than sea-swept Stanlawe. This longing was stimulated by a succession of misfortunes which befell the monastery. On February 3, 1279, the sea broke in, doing enormous damage; a few years later, 1287, the great tower of the church was blown down; and in 1289, not only did the greater part of the conventual buildings perish in a conflagration, but the sea for the second time inundated the abbey, remaining in the outbuildings to the depth of three or four feet, so that it was not possible for persons to remain there without peril. A petition was presented to Pope Nicholas IV. for permission to remove to Whalley, and in addition to the misfortunes already mentioned, it was stated that owing to the continual

inroads of the sea there was no safe access to or return from the monastery for any visitors.

The translation to Whalley was strongly opposed by the Abbot of Salleye, as bringing a rival monastery too near them, contrary to the constitutions of the order, and as tending to their impoverishment and the raising of prices—butter and cheese, iron, salt, timber, fish, and poultry. The arguments brought forward by the Abbot of Salleye throw some light on the monastic usages of the day. The tithes of corn and other things were bought by the abbot at a reduced price, which was convenient, as the brethren were spared the expense of conveying provisions to the abbey from long distances of forty or sixty leagues along very badly kept roads. The dispute was settled by arbitration in 1305, the terms being that offenders of either monastery were to be punished by the chapter of the monastery whose privileges were interfered with, and preference in the purchase of tithe was to be allowed to the convent of Salleye.

On April 4, 1296, after several delays, Gregory de Northbury, as abbot, in place of Robert de Haworth, who preferred to remain at Stanlawe, took possession of Whalley. Earl Henry in person laid the foundation of the new abbey, the greater part of which was consecrated in 1306 by Thomas, Bishop of Candida Casa, commissioned by the Bishop of Chester, though the refectory and kitchen were not completed until the end of the century, and the last finish was not put to the stately pile until 1438.

The contrast between the old and the new home was most striking. In place of a cheerless marsh,

which grew little but rush and reed, with the hungry sea devastating and devouring what there was of cultivated ground, they came to a fine expanse of rich meadow and pasture, surrounded by an amphitheatre of sheltering hills, well clad with verdant woods.

The Rectors of Whalley, the last of whom was Petrus de Cestria, were like those of Blagborn (Blackburn) married men (*homines uxoriati*), and at Whalley they were called Deans, the Vicar's portion being £100. This title, it is suggested, was given because at the time when Whalley church was founded the population was so sparse, and the whole country so wild and uncultivated, and generally inaccessible, that the entire ecclesiastical jurisdiction was given up to the Rector of Whalley. The rectory was held by a kind of hereditary right, son succeeding father in due course.

It is characteristic of the age that "the great and good Earl" Henry took the chapel of Clitheroe Castle by force from the mother-church of Whalley, and gave it to his clerk William de Nunney.

Combermere Abbey, which is described in Bishop Gastrell's *Notitia Cestriensis* as a Benedictine foundation, was founded for the Cistercian Order by Hugh de Malbanc, son of the Norman grantee of Wich Malbanc, about 1133, with the consent of Randle, Earl of Chester, and Roger, Bishop of Chester. He endowed with it demesne lands around Wich Malbanc (Nantwich), a quarter of the town, the churches of Acton and Sandon and their dependent chapels. The usual exemption from various taxes and tolls and civic duties

was granted. Stanlawe Abbey and Hilton Abbey were also subject to Combermere. William de Lee, Abbot of Combermere, was present at the dedication of Whalley Abbey, whilst Richard de Rodierd who succeeded him was originally a monk of Stanlawe, and one of those who migrated with the brethren to Whalley.

Brother Thomas le Plumer, monk of Combermere, is mentioned in the Ministers' Accounts of Edward I.'s reign as being engaged at Chester Castle in removing the old lead on the great tower and replacing it with new lead, his wages for twenty-one days being fourteen shillings.

Pulton Abbey, also a Cistercian foundation, on the banks of the Dee, about six miles from Chester, was founded by Robert Pincerna, butler to Earl Randle II., in 1153, for monks to pray for his lord, then a prisoner in the hands of King Stephen, from whom, after his frequent acts of opposition, he could expect little mercy. When Earl Randle was arrested, the Welsh took the opportunity to make a furious raid upon "the province of Chester," when they were met by Robert de Montalt, Seneschal of Chester, and routed with the loss of many thousands in a battle near Nantwich. This foundation at Pulton was confirmed by the Earl on his release, and was enriched by the addition of a fishery and quittance from toll at the mill.

The Welsh raids were so frequent that Earl Randle Blundeville, about 1214, transferred the brethren to Dieulacresse in Staffordshire, where on his return from the Holy Land he built them a convent.

Several legends are told of this abbey. It is said of Earl Randle Gernons that a number of beings under command of a powerful leader passed by the cell of a hermit near Wallingford. Being asked who they were, and what was their errand, one of the company replied, "We are demons, and we are hastening to the death-bed of Randle to accuse him of his sins." The demon being adjured to return within a month and report what had been done, said on his return that "Earl Randal for his crimes had been condemned to the pains of hell; but the dogs of Dieulacresse and many others with them barked so incessantly as long as he was there, as to fill our homes with their clamour, until our prince in his annoyance ordered that the Earl should be expelled from our confines," for no greater enemy of theirs than Earl Randle had ever entered the infernal dominions, inasmuch as the orisons which had been offered up for him had released from torments the souls of thousands who had been associated with him in these supplications.

Another story of the same foundation illustrates the belief of the times. Earl Randle Blundeville, being caught in a severe storm at sea, encouraged his comrades to hope for the cessation of the storm, for about two a.m. the monks in his abbey of Dieulacresse would just then be rising to their prayers, and they would remember him in them, and the storm would surely cease.

Pulton Abbey was peopled with monks from Combermere, and William, the first abbot of Combermere, was made trustee of the lands given by its

founder. It was therefore regarded as a daughter of Combermere.

Furness is the only other Cistercian abbey in the old diocese of Chester. Begun at Tulket in Amounderness in 1124 for monks of Savigny in France, three years later it was removed to a beautiful spot then called Bekangesgill, valley of the nightshade.[1] King Stephen the founder, then Earl of Moreton, gave his forest of Furness with Walney, lands at Walton and Ulverston, and a fishery at Lancaster. Other benefactors were Michael Fleming and William de Lancastre, who had shown his pious liberality in another district. "Few abbeys could boast of more royal protection, in addition to that of two Popes." Camden declares that out of this place the bishops of the Isle of Man were formerly wont to be chosen, Furness being the mother of many monasteries in that island and in Ireland. This great abbey is still magnificent in its ruins, which are justly reckoned among the most striking of monastic remains.

Mention should be made of Cokersand Abbey, first a hermitage, then a hospital for infirm brethren under a prior, subject to the Abbey of Leicester, founded in the reign of Henry II. by the same Baron of Kendal, William de Lancastre, whose name is honoured in connection with other benefactions. In 1190 it was changed to an abbey of Premonstratensian Canons, and it received valuable grants from Earl Henry de Lascy and John de Lascy.

As to the architecture and general structure of the religious houses, they had many features in common,

[1] On the abbey seal, sprigs of the nightshade are introduced.

and certainly those in Cheshire, if dependence can be placed on the views by the brothers Buck at the commencement of the last century, were very similar. Each building had its foundations, its lower storey, corners, and gables, and its one or more towers built of stone. The upper storey was constructed of timber and plaster after the usual fashion of Cheshire houses. Each had its solar or large apartment rising into the roof; while the face of the upper storey in each was decorated with a geometrical pattern in black and white, which gave a more domestic look to the building, and added to the picturesqueness of its outline. At Norton as at Combermere, Vale Royal, and Stanlawe, the upper storey was approached by an external flight of steps, and at Norton and Combermere there are evident traces of cloisters. There would be in all the gateway under the tower, and a wall to join the close with the abbot's or prior's lodgings at one corner. The church and the chapter-house to the east of the main building would be approached by a cloister, which would serve as a covered way by which the religious might pass to the church or to the chapter-house either for prayer or for other purposes by night or by day. In rear of the house would be the fish-tanks or stews, so necessary in the domestic arrangements of the time.

One more kind of foundation should be mentioned, that which belonged to the community of Knights Hospitallers of Jerusalem. One of their cells, or subordinate foundations, otherwise called "a Commandery," was said to have been established at Great Barrow near Chester, given by Robert de Bachefruy

in the reign of Henry II. It would appear, however, that the Commandery was at Yeveley in Derbyshire, and that the advowson of Barrow was given to the Hospitallers settled at Yeveley. To the same Commandery Alfred Russell gave the domain of Verdone in Cheshire, and Richard de Fitton that of Frodsham. Another Commandery was at Irby in Wirral.

CHAPTER III

The Abbey of Vale Royal—The Coming of the friars—Their violent and riotous conduct—Foundations of chantries—Repairs neglected—Hermits and anchorites—Privilege of sanctuary—Churches used for secular purposes.

In the previous chapter some account has been given of the religious houses founded in the counties of Cheshire and Lancashire during the Norman period and the reigns of the first Plantagenet sovereigns. The story of one house which was established at the close of the troublous wars with the Barons, and which enjoyed the special favour of the religiously-minded Edward I., is left to be told in this chapter. The Abbey of Vale Royal owes its foundation to a vow which Prince Edward made when on the point of suffering shipwreck as he returned from the Holy Land. . . "The vow was instantaneously accepted by the Blessed Virgin, the vessel righted itself, and was miraculously brought safe into port; the sailors disembarked, the Prince landing last of all, and immediately the vessel broke in pieces, and every fragment of the wreck vanished under the waters." So runs the legend in the Chronicle. It is an historical fact that Edward began in his father's lifetime, 1266,

to raise a building in the manor of Dernhall for one hundred monks of the Cistercian Order. This colony of brethren the Prince brought from Dore Abbey, where he had experienced kindness during his imprisonment by the barons. The first settlement was made in 1273, but preparations were shortly after made for the new home at Vale Royal. The King laid the first stone of the new building August 2, 1277, upon the site of the high altar, in the presence of a great concourse of nobles; his consort, Queen Eleanor, laying two other stones, one for herself and the second for her son Alphonso, and the nobles themselves following her example, and each laying one stone.[1] The site was consecrated by Anian, Bishop of St. Asaph, who was assisted by the famous Chancellor, Robert Burnel, Bishop of Bath and Wells. The monks removed hither in 1281, but were obliged to live temporarily in mean and strait lodgings until the great abbey with its extensive offices was finished in 1330, at a cost of £32,000. This enormous sum had been in great measure provided out of the revenues of Chester, the King (Edward II.) having procured an order of Parliament that £1000 yearly should be paid out of these funds to the building amount. He endowed it with the churches of Frodsham, Weaverham, Kirkham, and Castleton, as well as with manors in Cheshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, and even in South Wales (Llanbadarn Vawr). He further secured for

[1] The nobles present were Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, Edmund, Earl of Cornwall, John de Warrenne, Earl of Surrey, William de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, Otto de Grandison, Robert de Vere, and two earls from foreign parts.

the abbey, by advantageous exchanges, valuable property, such as the manor of Bradford on the banks of the Weaver, between Winsford and Northwich, for which he gave the original owners the sergeancy of the East Gate and the estate of Bruareshalgh. This special favour of the King was not accompanied with loyal and kindly feeling from the tenants and dependants and the neighbouring landowners. It will be useful to transcribe here some of the customs of the manor of Dernhall which were deemed so oppressive as to give just cause for the frequent acts of resistance to the authority of the abbot and his bailiff.

"The natives owed suit to the abbot's court indefinitely at the will of the lord or his bailiff, and if warned over-night must attend in the morning. In addition to the usual requirement to resort to the abbey mills, and pay pannage for their hogs, the tenants had to purchase from the abbot at his own price the power of marrying their daughters out of the manor, and if they themselves went astray carnally pay their fine. At the death of any 'native,' the abbot became entitled to his pigs and capons, his horses at grass, his domestic horse, his bees, pork, linen and woollen cloth, his money in gold and silver, his brazen vessels; but the widow, by a concession of the abbot, was allowed to keep the metal, the abbot having the option of purchasing the vessels. Corn standing and gathered was to be divided between widow and abbot. The abbot was allowed to purchase a hen or a duck for 2*d.*, and a duckling in Lent for 1½*d.*, and have the first offer of any hay or corn for sale. In time of war the 'natives'

should keep watch for a time unlimited at Dernhall Court, if watch were then kept at Chester Castle."[1]

It is not to be wondered at that the abbots and the whole monastery should, almost from the first, be regarded with confirmed dislike as harsh and oppressive masters. This dislike took more than once a very pronounced form. Walter de Hereford, the second abbot, is memorable for defeating a knight and his armed retainers who attempted to force a passage through the precincts of the abbey. He afterwards showed courage in appearing in the court of Chester, after some popular disturbances excited against his convent by the Justice of Chester, and pleading his cause successfully in person after his attendants had fled. So hated was his successor, John de Hoo, by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, that he sought a licence to resign. The fourth abbot, Richard de Evesham (when a brother of the monastery), had his horse shot under him with arrows as he was collecting tithes. The feeling of the neighbours was so hostile that the brethren did not venture to pass beyond the consecrated limits. In 1321 those who did so were pursued by the Winningtons, Leghtons, and Bulkeleys, and only saved their lives by flight,

[1] In connection with the rights claimed over their dependants by the abbots and priors of convents, it will be interesting to refer to a grant made in the reign of Edward I. to the abbey of Dieulacresse, which is preserved among the Eaton manuscripts. Sir Robert de Pulford, Kt., gives to the abbey three *nativi* or born bond-servants, Adam and William, sons of Thomas, and their sister, as well as their goods and *issue* (sequela), transferred by sale as if they were so many sheep or oxen (Eaton MSS. Ed. i. no. 52).

and on another occasion in the same year the Oldyntons murdered John Boddeworth, a monk of the abbey, and afterwards played at football with his head. This unhappy state of things, it is to be remembered, existed before the completion of the abbey in 1330. The year before this important event in its history, in 1329, a violent quarrel took place between the monks and the townspeople, which ended in the submission of the latter, who publicly owned their misconduct with halters round their necks, and consented to pay a heavy fine.

In 1336 a large number of the "natives" of Dernhall and Over appeared before the Justice of Chester as he was travelling in the neighbourhood, and laid before him their complaints of great oppression by the abbot. This only resulted in the imprisonment of the ringleaders by the abbot. They next made an attempt to appeal to the King in person, under pretence of making a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas at Hereford. This attempt again ended in their imprisonment at Nottingham. At last some of their number succeeded in laying their grievances before the King in Parliament in London, and Henry de Ferrars, the Justice of Chester, was commissioned to inquire into the allegations. Once more the abbot, with his charters and other evidence, was too powerful for them, and was allowed to wreak his vengeance. At length they were able to enlist the sympathies of Queen Philippa, who was induced to move the abbot to mercy. About this time, 1336, Abbot Peter was attacked by the tenantry under the command of Sir William Venables of Bradwall (who

had a feud with the abbot on his brother the Baron of Kinderton's account), as he was returning home from a distant expedition. His palfreyman was shot dead, and after considerable bloodshed the abbot was dragged in some ignominy before the King. The result was that the rebellious tenants were put in the stocks and then imprisoned at Weverham, and Henry Pym, their leader, incurred the forfeiture of all his lands in Dernhall, and was sentenced to offer up a wax taper for the remainder of his life in the church of Vale Royal at the Festival of the Assumption.

The following year difficulty arose with one of higher rank, and in a neighbouring county. Sir William Clifton, feeling himself aggrieved with the abbot's method of gathering tithes, overturned his wains, flogged his secretary through the streets of Preston, maimed the rector of Kirkham's hunting palfrey, and bursting into Kirkham church with his armed retainers, obstructed the celebration of the rite of baptism. The abbot and his convent were by no means guiltless. Besides the acts of oppression which were only too patent, though the verdict was in their favour, obtained, as was alleged, by bribery,[1] in 1311

[1] Bribery was not unknown at this time; for Sir John Savage succeeds in exacting £20 from Thomas Erdeley, Abbot of Chester, on the threat of interfering in certain actions before the justiciary's court. The Abbot of Dieulacresse gave him £100 not to indict him for hunting in Macclesfield Forest. Roger Venables, persona de ecclesia de Rouesthorn, pays him 100 marks on the same compulsion. Thomas de Newport, Abbot of St. Werburgh's (1363—1385), is recorded to have bribed several of the jury appointed to try a case between William de Chevelegh and

Abbot Richard of Evesham and several of his monks were indicted for receiving and sheltering a gang of notorious burglars and robbers, and one of the monks was ordered to be arrested as concerned in such burglary. It is stated that the warrant could not be served without an infringement of the liberties of the Church, and we are told, as an illustration of the power of the Church at that time, that on appeal being made to the King, he directed the Justice of Chester, Peter de Tybtot, to respect the abbot's privileges. Another abbot, Henry de Weryngton, otherwise Henry Arosmith, was not so fortunate. He was attacked by George de Wever at the head of twenty-four armed men in Bradford Wood, on the Tuesday before Pentecost. "Robert Pryket gave him a deep wound in the right shoulder with a sword; John Bamford struck him with an iron bill; George Wever then pierced him twice through the middle of his body with his sword, pinning him to the earth; Richard de Astull, vicar of the Church of Over, struck him with a sword through the middle of the neck, in the throat, and in the face. Having completed their ghastly work, the murderers fled to Holt Castle. It is to be noted that the abbot who was murdered in this pitiless fashion had been indicted five years before

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himself ("*ad adjuvandum ipsum Abbatem in jure suo de predicto placito*"). The amount of the bribes is noted, with the names of the jurors who came from different districts: David de Wever received 20*s.*; Robert de Eulowe 20*s.*; Richard le Bruyn and Thomas de Shokelache 13*s.* 4*d.* each; Ralph de Eggerton 10*s.*; John de Golburn 10*s.*; John de Rosumgreve 6*s.* 8*d.*; David de Overton 6*s.* 8*d.* (*Welsh Indict. Roll*, 4).

(10 Henry VI.) for having ravished Margaret Heton at Over on Monday after All Saints' Day.

The "Coming of the Friars," while it largely supplemented the spiritual teaching of the secular and regular clergy in Cheshire and Lancashire, was destined to interfere very considerably with the ecclesiastical arrangements of the diocese.

Compared, in their professed poverty, to "Gideon's host going forth with empty pitchers to fight the battles of the Lord, men whose desires, as far as the good things of this world went, were summed up in the simple petition, 'Give us this day our daily bread!' the zeal and energy which they displayed in seeking after men's souls, and their self-denying lives, won for them everywhere a ready acceptance." They were the representatives of the Voluntary Principle; professing to live on public charity, they went about in couples with wallets on their shoulders to receive in any form the alms of the faithful. They made themselves acceptable to the mass of the people by their ready wit and merry tales, and did not confine themselves altogether to spiritual duties. Though at first they proved a real help to the town clergy, winning success among the very lowest and poorest where the parish priest had failed to make his way, in time they began to supplant him in his general ministration, as well as completing his impoverishment. The monastic bodies had grown rich at the expense of the secular clergy, securing the great tithes of the chief parish churches, and sending out their vicars to perform the necessary offices. The friars swept into their capacious wallets the voluntary offerings of

the people, and when a will was being made, they were by no means forgotten in the assignment of legacies by persons who held them in great respect for their austere and devout lives.

At first both Dominicans and Franciscans refused all houses and lands. But soon they began to acquire land for the extensive buildings which, in violation of the principles of their order, they erected in the various towns. In Chester the Dominicans, or Preaching Friars, were established by Bishop Stavenby (1224—1238). Earl Randle Blundeville gave the friars land at Coventry for the erection of a church, and it is very likely that he would show the same favour to the brethren who settled in Chester, and as he died in 1232, the date of this settlement would correspond with the commencement of Bishop Stavenby's episcopate. The Bishop appears to have feared that Chester could not support two houses of begging preachers, for it was not until he had been persuaded by Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, that he withdrew his opposition to the establishment of the Friars Minor. This would be about 1236, the year before his death. The Friars Minor or Grey Friars usually chose the poorest quarters, on the least valuable ground, and devoted themselves specially to the case of lepers. Their house in Chester was near the Watergate, a place now occupied by the new Linen Hall. Their church became in later days a spacious building with a lofty spire. In the reign of Henry VIII. (20 Hen. VIII.) they had fallen into grievous poverty, for they granted the nave and three aisles of this church to the merchants and sailors of Chester for a place to store and

repair sails and other things requisite for their ships—the merchants undertaking all the repairs of the fabric.

The Dominicans were settled in the south-west part of the city, the residence of the Stanley family, the oft-sketched Derby House, being part of the buildings. The brethren were especially distinguished for their skill and enterprise as water-engineers, and are mentioned early in Edward I.'s reign as receiving permission to make an aqueduct to their house from a spring near the gallows at Boughton.

The third order settled in Chester was that of the Carmelites, or White Friars. They were the last of the four mendicant orders, in all general processions forced to give place to the others. They were introduced into Europe in 1216 by the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Edward I. gave them their house in London; but it was not until 1279 that they were established in Chester by one Thomas Stadham. Their house was also in the south-west of the city near the street still called White Friars, and its steeple, of great height and beauty, served for many years as a valuable landmark for sailors. The Carmelites and Dominicans are repeatedly mentioned in the City Records as concerned in assaults, acts of violence, and riots. It is mentioned especially of the Carmelites in 1454, that they roamed through the city at night armed, to the terror of the citizens. There appear to have been occasional feuds between the two orders, which issued in violent assaults.

It is highly honourable to the Friars Minor that none of them are represented as having taken any part in these riotous and disorderly proceedings which

so disgraced the members of the other two orders, especially during the reign of Henry VI. The Chester Friary, with those at Shrewsbury, Lichfield, Preston, and Lancaster, was under the custody or Wardenship of Worcester, one of the seven districts into which England was divided.

In a list given by Mr. Cunningham of the monastic houses supplying wool to the Florentine and Flemish markets in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the following Cheshire and Lancashire houses occur in the Flemish list, which is about 1280—

	Combermere.	C[istercian].
	Stanlaw, £36.	C.
	Vale Royal.	C.
	Chester, £35.	B[enedictine].
(Lanc.)	Furness, £34.	C.

To this period belongs the foundation of chantries, the offspring of a pious regard for the souls of the departed, stimulated by the belief in purgatory, which had come to be commonly inculcated in the middle ages. The grants of lands and possessions to abbeys and churches in the eleventh and twelfth centuries had been coupled with a condition that prayers should be offered for the souls of the founder and his ancestors and successors. These chantries were an extension of this system, and a legacy for so many masses within a certain time, or the endowment of a chantry priest for ever, was the commonest form in which remorse for an ill-spent life found expression. The will of John Coly, a citizen of Chester, who died in 1413, illustrates the belief in purgatory referred to.

After several other bequests to the clergy of different churches in the city, and to the poor, he directs payment of 10*s.* to be made to the Friars Minor for four trigintals or trentals, *i. e.* masses for thirty days to be said for his soul; 6*s.* 8*d.* to the Friars Preachers for two trentals; and 6*s.* 8*d.* to the Carmelites for the same purpose.

Some of these chantries were attached to the churches, and were small chapels under the same roof served by the clergy of the church, or by some chaplain appointed for the purpose. Such were the chantries in Manchester Collegiate Church, the Trafford Chapel, dedicated before 1349 to the Blessed Virgin by the Traffords of Trafford, the chaplain bearing the title down to Bishop Bird's visitation in 1547 of "the Ladie prieste of Manchester"; and St. Nicholas' Chantry founded by a De Gresley before 1311.

So also at Liverpool, within the chapel of St. Nicholas, were two, dedicated respectively to St. John (by John de Liverpool, *circ.* 1326), to St. Mary (by Henry Plantagenet, son of Henry, Earl of Lancaster), and a third at the altar of St. Nicholas, by John of Gaunt, *circ.* 1369.

In Harwood Church, in the Blackburn deanery, at the east end of the south aisle, Thomas Hesketh endowed St. Bartholomew's chantry about 1389; and in Burnley Church, at the east end of the north aisle, there was a similar foundation, dedicated by Thomas de la Legh to the Blessed Virgin, *circ.* 1373. Preston Church had the Holy Rood chantry founded by Sir Richard de Hoghton, Kt., in 1341, which in the

seventeenth century was known as the "Hoghton Box," a small enclosure, panelled or boarded round as a pew, with a pavement of wood instead of tiles.

Other chantries were endowed by licence from the King, in consequence of the distance from the mother church. Thus Dame Mabella, widow of Sir Wm. de Bradeshaw, Kt., endowed one, in the parish of Blackrod, dedicated to St. Katharine, at a distance of five miles from the parish church. The same pious lady endowed another chantry at Wigan. Several were founded by unknown benefactors, for the same reason doubtless, in the extensive parish of Whalley between 1200 and 1300. Sir Robert Banastre in 1284 chose Newton Chapel, Winwick, as a site for a chantry on the same grounds. To these must be added the foundations of the Butlers at Warrington (*c.* 1380), Sir Gilbert de Haydock, Kt. (1330), in Winwick; Sir William de Hesketh's at Rufford (1346); Sir Wm. Harington's (1360) in Leyland; John de Winwick's and Richard de Winwick, in Huyton; Sir John Delves' at Handbridge, a suburb of Chester, which was largely endowed, 1396; and those in Eccles Church (Lancashire) by Thomas del Bothe in 1368, by Lawrence Bothe, successively Archdeacon of Richmond and Archbishop of York, in 1450, and his brother, William Bothe, also Archbishop of York, in 1460.

Some were established on an extensive scale, as that at Bunbury, founded by Sir Hugh Calveley in the tenth year of Richard II., for a master and six secular chaplains. At the time of the Dissolution,

besides the warden and chaplains, there were two choristers. The Priory of Holand, in Wigan, was originally a college or chantry, with a dean and twelve secular priests. This was changed in 1319 by Walter, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, at the petition of Sir Robert de Holand, into a priory for Benedictine monks, disagreements among the monks and neglect of religious duties being assigned as the chief cause for the alteration. Complaints are not infrequently made by the laity in this century of remissness on the part of religious houses to keep their outlying chapels in repair, and continue the appointed services otherwise than on Sundays.

Norton Priory was remiss in this way in 1425, and again in 1452 as regards Aston Chapel, and the Abbot of Shrewsbury much earlier (17 Edward II.) suffered forfeiture of a piece of land near Thelwall, and a fishery in Merse Water, because for more than sixty years he had intermitted the duty at a certain chantry at Wyldgreave.

Valuable offerings were made from time to time to these chantries, as at Eccles, where Sir Gervas Clifton left, 1491, in his will to the chantry founded by his relative, Archbishop Lawrence Bothe, precious altar-cloths of silk, hangings of cloth of gold, bawdkyne, and of russet satin, formerly belonging to the archbishop, and therefore of great value, to be made into vestments. On the other hand, the executors of another benefactor, John Fayrfax, Rector of Prescot, 1393, directed such liberal provision to be made for all comers on the day of his burial—six oxen, twenty sheep, six quarters of wheat, and ten of

malt—that nothing was left for the chantry which he intended to found and endow.

The chantry priests were but poorly housed. "Occasionally, as at Liverpool, Burnley, and Ribchester, an appropriate house and garden are provided for the accommodation of the chantry priest. But for the most part he had one or two small rooms in a half-timbered hut, with little light, no fire-place, and an open chimney, with turf burning on the hearth between Michaelmas and Candlemas, and a yule log at Christmas. A bench or a stool, a wooden bedstead, and a mattress of straw would comprise the furniture and household comforts of these ecclesiastics. It is hardly to be supposed that the priest had a servant to stock his larder, or minister to his culinary wants, and he probably prepared his own frugal fare. This would consist of salted meat twice a week. On the day of his patron saint, or on some great anniversary, he would have fresh meat and fish, and on high festivals a double mess. Beans to boil, and oatmeal for porridge, with 'haberdine,' ling, red-herrings, cheese, oatcake, and apples, would be his ordinary food; whilst eggs, coarse barley bread, and fresh fish would be amongst the luxuries of the table, and were not very sumptuous refections.

"The habit or costume of the chantry priest was a coarse frieze cassock with a leathern girdle, thick clogs, and a felt hat, or none at all. Sometimes he carried, like the laity, a baselarde or dagger, and sometimes was not over-scrupulous in its use." [1]

The hermits and anchorites were also a feature of

[1] *History of the Chantries*, XX., Chetham Society.

the ecclesiastical life of this period. There was below St. John's Church, Chester, an anchorite's cell, which was erroneously believed to have been tenanted by King Harold, after the Battle of Hastings. Into this a friar was inducted formally in 1363. Another such cell or hermitage was in Handbridge, near Chester. John Spicer, hermit, obtains a warrant, September 9, 1358, from Edward, Prince of Wales, pardoning him for acquiring to himself and his successors, hermits, of Stephen de Merton, a parcel of land between the Dee and the quarry, and building thereon a hermitage, enclosed within a wall. Another hermitage of St. James' stood beyond the Dee Bridge, to which Ieuan ap Blethyn ap Caswet was appointed by the King as hermit, and whose conduct and regimen the King directs the mayor and sheriffs to inquire into (February 16, 1455). His predecessor, John Benet, 1450, is indicted as a common receiver of robbers, sheltering common malefactors in his hermitage, and keeping a common brothel.

In the earlier days, hermits usually sought the solitude of deserts, or the deep recesses of the woods. At this time they had begun to affect the places where men most do congregate—building their huts at the most frequented parts of the great woods, or at the corners of the bridges. Such a little chapel stood on the old bridge crossing the Mersey at Stockport, occupied by a hermit, who for a small coin offered up prayers for the safety of the wayfarers passing over the bridge. In a deed earlier than 1300 occurs the name of "Thomas le Hermyte of Stockporte"; and in 1366 Richard Webbester obtains a licence from

the Bishop of Lichfield to "celebrate and cause to be celebrated divine services in the oratory within his hermitage, near Stockport." Its situation is defined in a licence to Thomas, son of Henry de Mayncester, chaplain, 1372, to be "built at the end of the bridge at Stockport." A similar chapel stood on the bridge over the Dane at Congleton.

In ploughing up a field, called the Hermitage Field, about half-a-mile from the parish church at Tarporley, the labourers came upon the foundation of a small cell, built with red ashlar. The hermit had chosen for his retirement a delightful knoll commanding the Burton Hills and the Vale of Chester.

The reputation of these hermits was by no means high. In the statutes they are bracketed with beggars, wandering labourers, and vagabonds of all kinds, who were to be imprisoned without distinction while awaiting judgment. The only exception was for "approved hermits," except men of religion, and approved hermits having letters testimonial from the ordinary. "Piers Plowman," in his vision, while speaking favourably of sincere anchorites, whose lives accorded with their habit and profession, asks who are these false saints who have pitched their tents at the edge of the high-roads, or even in the towns, at the doors of the alehouses, who beg under the church porches, who eat and drink plentifully, and pass the evenings roasting themselves by the "hot coals," and when they have well drunk, draw them then to bed? And when they please they get up, roam about where they see a chance of getting this or that present of good food, a round of bacon, a loaf or half a loaf, a

lump of cheese, "and carieth it hom to his cote, and cast him to lyve in ydelnesse and in ese."

Henry, Duke of Lancaster, gave to the Abbey of Whalley 280 acres for the support of two recluses in the churchyard of Whalley, with two women to attend upon them. But to the "grete displeasaunce of hurt and disclander of the abbeye, divers of the wymen servants, have byn misgovernyd, and gotten with chyld within the sayd plase halowyd," and the property was consequently confiscated by King Henry VI. These were in all probability anchorites, not hermits, differing in this, that they were shut up in small cells attached to the parish church, the ceremony of enclosing them being looked upon as of great importance. They were obliged therefore to depend upon the services of an attendant, and as at Whalley, so in Chester, the anchorite of St. Chad (27 Edward I.) had a maid-servant named Cecilia, who waited upon him. Neighbouring householders as well as passers-by gave them food, which was delivered to them through a curtained hole in the wall.

The privilege of sanctuary belonged not only to the great abbey of Chester, but also to other ecclesiastical buildings in the diocese. The city and the county of Chester were from early times a place of asylum and sanctuary, where offenders against the law of the land or debtors might remain under the protection of the earl on payment of a fine called an "advowry." Such an arrangement gave Cheshire a bad name in course of time. But it was a common event in other parts of England, that when a robber, a murderer, or any felon found himself too hard pressed, he fled into a

church and found safety. In some churches, as at Durham, the suppliant fugitive was required to don a black gown with a yellow cross on the left shoulder, as the badge of St. Cuthbert, whose peace he had claimed. He was allowed to remain thirty-seven days, and then, if no pardon had been granted, he was to abjure his native land, and, subject to the supervision of the parish constable, make his way to the nearest coast, bearing in his hand a white wooden cross, ungirt, unshod, bareheaded, and sail away by the first ship which touched on that coast. It will be remembered, that among the privileges of St. Werburgh's, offenders against the law were allowed to come to the great annual fair held in front of the abbey, and to remain in Cheshire during its continuance free from arrest for previous offences.

This right of sanctuary was a profitable arrangement to the earl, abbot, and baron, as well as to the lessee of the advowries, and was all in keeping with the system by which serious offences, even including homicide, adultery, and the like, were compounded for by a pecuniary fine; an arrangement most prejudicial to the moral welfare of the wealthy noble, who could gratify his passions at no personal risk to himself on certain payments, while the poor man would find a wholesome restraint from such offences in the fear of having to smart in his own person, owing to the difficulty of finding compensation. It will be of interest to quote here the rules for the Sanctuary at St. Werburgh's as given in one of the Harleian Manuscripts (2159,976). "If any person or persons hereafter take for his tuition the Church

or any other hallowed ground within the precinct of the same monastery, for any murder or fellonie, then we award that the Coroner or Coroners of the said citie for the time beinge shall at their pleasure at everie such tyme enter and come within the precinct of the said Monastery to the said hallowed place, and there take and record the abjuration of the said person or persons soe taking the said Church or the hallowed ground, that soe taketh or asketh the grith of the holie Church: or if in the same holie place he will not abjure according to the lawe of the Realme, nor confesse any murder or fellonie by him committed, that then the Coroner &c. shall order them according to the course of the Common law, without lett or impediment of the said Abbot or any other the ministers or his servants inhabitinge within the said Monasterie."

Such a place of refuge was at the time necessary for the innocent as well as the guilty, as affording them the means of protecting themselves from injustice or a hasty dealing with accusations. Women and persons under age appear from the Plea Rolls to have frequently availed themselves of such shelter. Other accused persons pleaded the privilege of clergy, and one interesting case is recorded in the Plea Roll (Chester) of 46 Henry III., where the accused shows in support of his plea his shaven crown. Sometimes a serf ran away from his master and took refuge in a church, or an offender escaped from the officer who had apprehended him, and was able to make terms of surrender by paying a fine or other composition.

Besides the Sanctuary of St. Werburgh, Hoole

Heath near Chester, Overmarsh near Farndon, and Rudheath near Middlewich were places of refuge in Cheshire. Runcorn Church also appears to have possessed the privilege of sanctuary as late as 1403. Robert Morysson, a felon, who had feloniously killed one Thomas de Bulde, fled thither, and being afterwards allowed to escape, involved the parish in a fine of £8. Manchester shared with Chester and certain other towns the distinction of having a sanctuary,[1] but, finding that their city was being converted into a nest of crime, the inhabitants petitioned for its abolition. Manchester was relieved at the expense of Chester, and Chester in turn obtained discharge of the undesirable privilege, and passed it on to Stafford.

This relief was procured through the good offices of the Mayor, Mr. Hugh Aldersey, who, in conjunction with Mr. Foulk Dutton, took up a petition to King Henry VIII., representing that Chester, being a port town, and on the border of Wales, was an unfit place for a sanctuary, and that the merchants and inhabitants of Chester would suffer much inconvenience and loss by its continuance.

Something should be said in this chapter about the use of churches and ecclesiastical buildings generally for what would seem other than sacred purposes.[2] It

[1] Apparently separate from that maintained within the precincts of St. Werburgh's.

[2] It is to this non-ecclesiastical use of sacred buildings that allusion is made in the *Ship of Fooles*.

> "There are handled pleadings and causes of the law;
> There are made bargains of divers minor things,
> Buyings and sellings scant worth a hawe,
> And there are for lucre contrived false leasings."

is not surprising that at St. Mary's on the Hill, Chester, an inquiry into a charge of sacrilege should be held, but the persons appointed to conduct the inquiry were the mayor and sheriffs, in the presence of the Lieutenant-Governor of Cheshire.

Inquisitions post mortem, or for proof of age, as well as other inquiries and suits, were often held within churches, *e. g.* in Holy Trinity, Chester, a suit as to certain tanned hides belonging to a shoemaker; in St. Peter's, Chester, a ship-captain with twelve of his crew appeared to make a solemn protestation before the clergy of the church that certain cargo had been damaged by no fault of theirs or their ship, but "by the grace of God."

In the fourteenth century, two of the churches in Chester, and others in Stockport, Knutsford, Nantwich, Sandbach, Warrington, and Lancaster were used for sittings of the Earl Marshal's court, in the great heraldic dispute between Sir Richard le Scrope and Sir Robert le Grosvenor. The matter in question was the right to bear "a shield azure with a bend or." The cause was carried over several years, and amongst the commissioners acting for the Earl Marshal was William de Bromborough, "parson of Aldeford, who was also Rector of St. Olave's, Chester." He resigned his livings after the deposition of Richard II., and obtained leave to go on pilgrimage to foreign parts.

CHAPTER IV

The Barons' War—Violence to churches and ecclesiastics—Abbots of St. Werburgh's—Ravages of the Black Death.

NEITHER Cheshire nor Lancashire was without a bitter experience of the sufferings entailed by the Barons' War. Simon de Montfort had been successful in enlisting the support of the valiant Llewelyn ap Gryffydd against Henry, and in consequence of this alliance with the Welsh, there was a great feeling of insecurity in Chester. The city could not escape being eagerly sought after by both parties as a post of considerable importance, and as part of the preparations which were made to defend Chester in the interest of the Royal Earl, Prince Edward, against the barons, Sir William de la Zouche, the justiciary, directed some of the buildings of St. Werburgh's Abbey to be pulled down, and occupied the abbey itself with an armed force. Shortly afterwards, he heaped so many insults upon the ecclesiastical authorities in Chester that "the whole Church [clergy] of Chester, regular as well as secular, placed itself voluntarily under an interdict for four days." The justiciary, however, understood that compensation should be paid to the abbey for land and rents.

The neighbourhood of Warrington, where William le Boteler's superior lord, Earl Ferrars, was a supporter of Simon de Montfort, seems to have been especially a scene of violence and confusion.

The churches were not safe from intrusion, parties of marauders took possession of those at Leigh, Bury, and Winwick, and, unable to hold their own (excommunication appearing to be of little avail), the clergy were compelled to invoke the aid of the civil power.

During these troubles a new abbot had been elected at St. Werburgh's, Simon of Whitchurch. Simon de Montfort was at the time of his election, April 28, 1265, in possession of the Earldom of Chester, and his justiciary, Lucas de Taney, opposed Abbot Simon's admission to office for three weeks, taking the revenues into his own hands, and wasting the substance of the abbey in scandalous profligacy. Simon de Montfort, being appealed to, directed that the abbot should be admitted, and that all the goods that had been consumed, and the revenues accruing during the vacancy, should be restored. This concession did not please Prince Edward, and, when he in turn obtained the upper hand, he refused to sanction the abbot's appointment. Simon of Whitchurch, however, was a man of tact and ability, and succeeded in reconciling himself to the Prince. The favour which Edward showed to Abbot Simon as Prince he continued when he came to the throne, and in return for valuable service rendered in furnishing men and carriages for the expedition against Llewelyn in Wales, he granted the abbey a special charter, renewed the tithe of all venison killed in the Delamere

Forest, and gave the abbot permission to hunt anywhere in the forest.

It was in the abbacy of his friend Simon of Whitchurch that King Edward, according to his usual custom of offering up thanks publicly on the occasion of some great deliverance from danger or success in any expedition, commemorated at St. Werburgh's his subjugation of Wales. He attended at the abbey on May 26, 1283, with his Queen Eleanor, presenting as his royal offering a valuable cloth of gold, and he made oath to preserve the liberties of St. Werburgh. Notwithstanding this oath, on the death of Simon, February 22, 1290, the King retained the revenues of the abbey for two years. But Thomas de Byrchells, elected fourteenth abbot January 30, 1291, put forth a claim in 1292 against the King for the revenues during the vacancy, and was successful in proving it.

The growing importance of the abbey is shown in the fact that William de Bebyngton, who succeeded as abbot in 1324, obtained the mitre in 1345, and, the following year, exemption from the bishop's visitation. His tenure of office for a quarter of a century was otherwise uneventful, in this respect differing from that of Richard de Seynesbury (1349—1362), whose aggressive and turbulent conduct involved him in continual disputes. So loud were the complaints against Richard, that in 1362 the Abbot of St. Alban's, Provincial President of the Benedictine Order, with the Prior of Coventry and the Sub-prior of St. Alban's, visited the Abbey of St. Werburgh's under a Commission issued by the Abbot of Evesham. Abbot

Richard, dreading an inquiry into the dilapidations and offences, resigned to the Pope. His successor, Thomas de Newport (1363 — 1385), was in like manner involved in serious charges. The Indictment Rolls record against him cases of bribery of jurors in a suit, violation of the Assize of Bread and Beer, attempts to exercise unlawful jurisdiction, and even murder or manslaughter.

William de Mershton, who held the abbacy from July 1385 to January 13, 1386, was supposed to have been "a Lollard and follower of Wycliffe." He would appear to have been deposed and transferred to the Abbey of Evesham.

In the time of his successor, Henry de Sutton (1386—1410), occurred a great riot in the abbey. A number of armed men, headed by Sir Baldwyn de Radyngton, stormed the abbey, July 25, 1393, and took possession of it for four days, wasting the goods found there, ill-treating and killing one of the sheriffs of Chester, who came with the mayor to the rescue. A week later the same Sir Baldwyn, who was one of King Richard's faithful adherents, joined with Sir John Stanley of Lathom, at the head of 800 armed men and archers of Lancaster, in a ride "in manner of warre, with basnettes and speares within the countie of Chester by 5 leagues from the city." John of Gaunt taxed the Earl of Arundel in Parliament with having connived at this rising. It would appear as though the abbot and his convent were opposed to the King's party. It is, however, only one of many instances of the lawlessness of the times, which the King's Council had made repeated efforts to

check. The evil had commenced immediately after the terrible plague called the "Black Death," in 1348.

In considering the influences at work in favour of or adverse to religion and morality during this period we must not omit to notice this terrible pestilence, vaguely named the Black Death, from the mortality which marked its path. Its effects upon the social life of this diocese must have been as serious as they were in other parts of the kingdom. There is one ecclesiastical return preserved in the Record Office, which tells its sad tale.[1] It contains a statement of the number of deaths which occurred at this time within the Archdeaconry of Richmond, with the number of intestacies, which formed a considerable proportion of the whole. In the parish of "Lythum" (Lytham), of 140 deceased persons, eighty left no wills, and the administration of their goods fell, according to the law and usage of the time, to the Archdeacon of Richmond. In St. Michael's parish, eighty persons died, forty of them being intestate; in Pulton (le Fylde) sixty died, twenty intestate; in Preston, 3000 died, of whom only 300 had made their wills. In Poolton (le Sands) 800 died, 200 only leaving wills. In Kyrkham there were 3000 deaths, 200 are stated to have made wills. In Lancaster 3000 deaths are recorded, and 400 wills; in Garstang 2000 deaths, and 140 intestacies; in Cokerham 1000 deaths, 300 wills, and sixty intestacies. These "round" numbers appear curious, the number of testates and intestates

[1] 1349. Pestilence—Presentments of profits received by Dean of Amounderness, together with numbers of deaths.

does not correspond with the total, but it may be that the remainder not accounted for had nothing to leave. In Ribchester one hundred deaths, seventy wills, and forty intestacies are recorded.

In another membrane attached to this return is a statement of certain vicarages vacated by the pestilence. "The Chapel de la Mangdaleygne de Preston was 'void' for eight weeks in the time of pestilence," and "Sir Adam de Kyrkham, Doyan (Dean) de Amunderness, was 'paraitour Sir Henr' de Walton,' ercedekne de Richemound meisme le temps." Sir Adam de Kyrkham is also executor of Sir William Ballard, formerly Doyan d'Amounderness, and had to give account to the archdeacon of the "voydances" of several of the churches and of the mortuaries and oblations in his district. The vicarage of Kyrkham and the chapel of Gosenard were vacated twice; the Vicarage of Garstang twice; the church of Lancaster and the chapel of Stalmyn; the Vicarage of Pulton (le Fylde) and the chapel of Bispham; and the priory of "Lithum," are also mentioned as being accounted for by Sir Adam during the vacancies. This state of things we may be sure was not confined to the most northern deanery of the diocese. A reference to the lists of institutions to parishes in Cheshire shows that in addition to the deaths which must have occurred in the monasteries and among the *capellani* and inferior clergy, a large number of the rectories and vicarages were vacant in 1348-9. Thus in the hundred of Northwich, Swettenham and Warmingham were vacated twice in that year, Sandbach and Middlewich once. In Nantwich hundred, Wybunbury was

vacant twice, and Baddiley and St. Nicholas Chapel, Nantwich, once. In Macclesfield hundred there was a similar mortality at Wilmslow, Cheadle, and Northenden. In Edisbury hundred, Frodsham, Weverham, Over, Tarvin (twice), and Barrow lost their vicars in the same year, as well as Backford, Bebington (twice), and Woodchurch in Wirral. In Broxton, Lower Malpas, Tilston (twice), Handley; and in Bucklow, Lymme, Aldford (twice), and Pulford. In Chester, the city churches, as might be expected, suffered heavily, St. John's chantry priest, the vicars of St. Peter's and of Trinity, the Abbot of St. Werburgh's (William de Bebington), and the Prioress of St. Mary's dying in the same year, as well as one of the prebendaries of St. John's.

The Angel of Death would be busy in the parsonage and the monastery as well as in the cottage and the lordly mansion, and nowhere busier than among the filthy dens in the towns, so rank and foul owing to the neglect of sanitary laws customary in mediæval times. The awful visitation produced throughout the land a state of religious paralysis. Wild-eyed preachers declared in the deserted market-places that the pestilence was "the Messenger of Heaven to punish the wickedness of men." As often in times of great disaster, this announcement led persons in the recklessness of despair to indulge in gross debauchery and unclean living, and it required the efforts of many generations of good men to restore the state of religion to what it was before the great pestilence.[1]

[1] In a deed in the possession of Mr. Ireland Blackburn, at Hale Hall, Lancashire, which has been brought to my notice

It became exceedingly difficult to find clergy to fill the too numerous vacancies, and as they depended to a considerable extent upon the offerings of the faithful laity who had been swept off with no less virulence, the services of the Church became seriously hampered, and the educational and social standard of the clergy was markedly lowered. In addition to this the Black Death had a disastrous and permanent effect upon the economic arrangements of the time. No labourers could be had, while the harvest rotted on the land for lack of reapers. Labourers' wages were raised so high as to render it necessary to pass a statute to forbid the payment of any sum beyond the fixed payment. Numerous instances occur of prosecutions for evading this statute. The bailiff of the Abbot of St. Werburgh's could not understand that, so long as his master could afford it, he should be debarred from getting the abbey crops in at the cost of a higher and more tempting wage, but he was promptly fined.

The difficulty caused by the scarcity of labour was increased by the great dearth, and Langland's prophetic remarks in *Piers Plowman* are not without point at the present day in the face of the serious problem of the unemployed, if the warning were only heeded. "Workmen should work while they may, for hunger hitherward hasteth him fast, then Pestilence; when Pestilence withdraws, Famine shall then be judge, and Dawe the ditcher shall die for hunger, unless God grant a truce."

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by Mr. Fergusson Irvine, containing depositions taken in 1410 or 1411 from five or six different villagers of Culcheth, all the evidence is dated as fifty or sixty years since "the grete dethe."

The struggle between labour and capital was being carried on vigorously in town and country. It was intensified by the return of soldiers from the French wars, thrown in excessive numbers upon the labour market, disinclined from their previous life to work in any settled occupation, and ready to take part in any tumultuous rising. Heavy taxes imposed to defray the extravagant expenses of the King's household increased the general discontent. Cheshire had the unenviable notoriety of being a "spelunca latronum," for freebooters and malefactors, when hard pressed, retreated into the Palatine county, where the King's writ did not run, as to a safe sanctuary. These persons not only committed robberies and other enormities, but carried off young maidens, whom they released only after the payment of heavy ransoms. They formed themselves into armed bands, to the terror of the peaceful inhabitants. They lay in wait in the Cheshire woods, then very extensive, and made nightly raids upon the persons and cattle of the villagers. Even in the day-time neither life nor property was safe, and in some places it was not possible to attend the services of the Church except under the protection of a goodly escort. Richard issued one commission after another, but apparently to little purpose. In 1395 the King was obliged to write a strong letter to the sheriff of the county, commanding him to "arrest all disturbers of the peace, of whom there are a great number who committed felonies innumerable, and were the more bold to do so, inasmuch as no just punishment had followed them."

The riotous conduct extended into the towns. Fairs and markets were frequently the scene of great uproar and violence. In 1399 a considerable riot took place at Chester on the great festival of Corpus Christi, when the city companies went in procession through the city. A number of walkers, websters, and master weavers assembled in front of St. Peter's Church, armed with poleaxes and staves, and attacked a number of their journeymen, and in the City Records it is termed "horribilis affraia," the persons concerned being heavily fined.

CHAPTER V

Political leanings of the clergy—Waning influence of the Abbot of St. Werburgh—Suppression of monastic houses —Abbot of Norton's Insurrection—The Pilgrimage of Grace —Abbots of Whalley and Sawley hanged—Riotous conduct of the religious.

It is difficult to determine exactly the position taken by the clergy in Cheshire and Lancashire in the struggle between Richard and Bolingbroke. King Richard assumed in his wanderings from Ireland through Wales to Flint the garb of a friar, and Bolingbroke on entering the city of Chester before Richard's surrender was received in great state by a procession of all the clergy (*omnes viri religiosi*). John Trevor, Bishop of St. Asaph, who pronounced sentence of deposition on King Richard, and was sent as ambassador to Spain to justify Bolingbroke's action, defended Chester Castle as Chamberlain of Chester. Owain Glyndwr, in retaliation, burned down his cathedral and palace. On the other hand, the parsons of Pulford, Dodleston, Hanley, and Hawarden, as well as the mayor and citizens of Chester, took part in the rising under Henry Percy when he joined Glyndwr. We hear nothing at this time of Abbot Henry de

Sutton of St. Werburgh, whose influence must have been considerable, for he had but lately received licence to fortify his three principal manor-houses, Saighton, Little Sutton, and Ince.

The cause of religion must have seriously suffered during these troublous times, which were to be continued for many long years. The first year of Henry VI.'s reign was marked at Chester with much disturbance and riot. A large number of artisans of various occupations, headed by the mayor himself, the ex-mayor, and the two sheriffs, assembled themselves in riotous fashion, armed, on the festival of Corpus Christi, to the great alarm of their fellow-citizens, so that they did not venture to leave their houses. On another occasion the proceedings at the Court of Pleas had to be adjourned owing to the tumultuous following of one of the Cheshire esquires. Houses are broken into in the prosecution of private feuds, while murder, abduction, armed resistance to the law prevailed to an extent that had been unknown since the troublous times of Edward II. After the withdrawal of the English from France, these riotous assemblies grew more threatening. An instance may be given of what occurred at Dodleston, near Chester, on the Sunday after Easter, 1 Edward IV. Jenkyn Tervyn, late of Over Kynerton (in the parish), attacked and inflicted a dangerous wound on Richard Hyndeley near the church about two o'clock. Not content with this, on the same Sunday about five o'clock, he came with 100 men on foot and on horseback (most of them Welshmen, armed with various weapons), and broke

into Hyndeley's house, and as he lay wounded in bed again assaulted him so severely that he died. In this fashion the miserable years went by stained with bloodshed and violence, when "might" was too often "right." An Englishman's house, his very castle in truth, had to be defended anxiously by moat and armed force; cattle-lifting was no longer confined to the Scotch and Welsh borderers, and varied frequently by the carrying off of rich householders, who were detained in close confinement until an ample ransom had been paid.

The waning influence of the monastic community is sufficiently illustrated by the issue of the struggle which the mayors of Chester carried on successfully with the abbots of St. Werburgh's, who for so many generations had been of the highest importance in the Palatine city, second only to the Earl himself.

Abbot Richard Oldon (1453—1485), who was also from 1481 Bishop of the Isle of Man, was not only imprisoned in Chester Castle for some serious offence, and bound in a heavy sum not to make his escape, but he was indicted in one of the city courts (the Portmote) for removing the city boundaries by the Northgate, and in two successive years bound over in £1000 to keep the peace towards the mayor. Abbot Oldon's successor, Simon Ripley (1485—1493), appears to have been too busy in restoring the waste places on his spiritual patrimony to give attention to feuds with the civil authorities. But Abbot John Birchenshaw, who was elected in 1493, certainly fell on evil days. The question of the "independent soke" of the abbey was hotly debated. A crisis arose in 1507 in con-

nection with an affray which took place in Northgate Street, outside the Northgate. The steward of the abbey and another official called the persons implicated before them, and bound them to keep the peace to one another. This the mayor and aldermen deemed to be "a derogation and prejudice to the liberties of the city." The abbot and his officers were summoned before the King's commissioners, and the whole question of the jurisdiction of the abbey as an independent soke, the holding of courts, arrests, the trial of offences, and the limits of the monastery was argued before arbitrators, who gave a decision not altogether in favour of the abbey. The dispute was renewed in 1510, owing to the abbot's refusal to accept the award. In 1522 the mayor was able to procure the "putting down of the abbot"; the contest went on until in 1529 Abbot Birchenshaw was deprived of office, though restored again shortly afterwards. It does not appear whether the vacancy was created by John Birchenshaw's death, but February 12, 1537, a licence was granted to elect an abbot, and Thomas Clarke was chosen, March 11, 1538, as the last abbot, being rewarded, for his ready compliance with King Henry's wishes, by his appointment as the first dean of the new cathedral.

Two years earlier, in 1536, the first act of spoliation had taken place, when the lesser monastic houses were suppressed, and their goods and property seized for the replenishing of the autocratic King's purse and the gratification of his greedy favourites. The feeling against this sweeping act of confiscation and plunder was sufficiently strong in Cheshire and Lancashire to

induce many to join in the "Pilgrimage of Grace." But the vigorous action of the sheriff, Sir Piers Dutton, checked its spread. The Abbot of Norton, who was the only head of a religious house from Cheshire who attended Convocation in person at St. Paul's when Queen Katherine's marriage was under consideration,[1] was prominent in this insurrection. On August 3, 1536, Dutton writes to Cromwell that he had taken the bodies of the Abbot of Norton and some of his servants, Randal Brereton, baron of the King's Exchequer at Chester, and John Hall of Chester, merchant, and had them in his custody and keeping. These prisoners were subsequently transferred to Chester Castle and very possibly hanged.

The following report was sent by Sir Piers Dutton, Kt., to Sir Thomas Audley, Lord Chancellor, on the insurrection of the Abbot of Norton against the King's commissioners.

"Pleasethe it yo^r good Lordshippe to be advertesed Mr. Combes and Mr. Bolles the Kynges commissyoneres within the county of Chestere were lately at Norton within the same county for the suppressyng of the abbey theare, and when they had packed uppe suche juelles and other stuffe as they had theare, and thought uppon the morowe after to departe them, thabbot gadered a gret company to gedere to the number of towe or thre hondred persones, so that the sayd comyssyoners weare in feare of their lyves and weare fayne to take a tower theare: and theruppon sent a lettere unto me asserteninge what danger they wear in, and desyred me to com to assyst them, or else they weare never lyke to come thence; which lettere

[1] The Abbots of Chester, Vale Royal, and Combermere, and the Prior of Birkenhead had sent their proxies.

came to me about 9 of the clock in the same night, I came thether with suche of my loveres and tenants as I had neare aboute me, and found diveres fyeres made theare, as well within the gates as without. And the said abbot had caused an ox and other vittalles to be kylled and prepared for suche his company as he had then thear: and it was thought in the morowe after he had come forthe to have had a greate number moore; notwithstanding I used pollessy and cam sudenly uppon them, so that the company that weare theare fledd, and some of them took pooles and wateres, and it was so darke that I could not fynd them, and it was thought yf the matter had not byn quikly handled, it wold have growne to further inconvenience, to what danger, God knoweth: howbeit I took the abbot and thre of channones and brought them to the kyng's castell of Halton, and thear comytted them to ward to the constable to be kept as the Kyng's rebellious, upon payne of a thousand pounds: and afterward sawe the sayd comyssioners with their stuffe convayed thense, and William Perker, the Kyng's servant, who is appointed to be the King's fermore their, to be restored to his possession, whearfoare it may be like your good lordshipe that the Kyng's grace may have knoledge hearof, and that his pleasure maye be further knowne theirin, which I shalbe alwayes redy and glad to accomplishe to the uttermost of my powere, as knowethe our Lord God who ever preserve your good lordshipe with muche honor. At Dutton the xii of October anno 1536, by your assured

"Petrus Dutton, Kt."

A royal warrant issued from Henry VIII. to Sir Piers Dutton, Sheriff, and Sir Wm. Brereton, deputy Chamberlain, acknowledging the report made to the Lord Chancellor, and other letters to Lord Cromwelle, and Sir Wm. Brereton.

"For answer whearunto ye shall understand that forasmuche as it apperethe that the sayd late abbot and channones have most trayterously used them selves agaynst us and our relme, our pleasure and comaundemente is, that yf this shall fully appeare to you to bee true that then you shall emediately uppon the right hearof, withoute any maner further delaye, cause them to be hanged as most arrante traytores in such sundrey places as ye shall thinke requisete for the terible example of all otheres herafter: and hearin faylle ye not traville with suche dexterity as this matere maye be fyneshed with all possyble diligense.

"Oct. 20, 1536."

Before, however, the King's commands to execute the prisoners could be carried out, Sir Piers received another letter, dated "Preston, Oct. 30, 1536," from Edward Earl of Derby, which was a kind of supersedeas. It directs that in view of a report from the Earl of Shrewsbury, the King's Lieutenant, the Earls of Rutland and Huntingdon, that the Duke of Norfolk and they "had stayed the commons of Yorkshire," and countermanding a muster which had been ordered for the Monday next coming at Whalley Abbey, and bidding them do no harm to the commoners.

No authentic document has been found to show whether the Abbot of Norton had the benefit of the amnesty granted by the Duke of Norfolk, or whether he shared the fate which certainly befell the abbots of Whalley, Salleye, and other northern ecclesiastics, and is said to have befallen the Abbot of Vale Royal.

The rising had been more successful in the northern districts. Aske published an order, in pursuance of which the monasteries suppressed were re-occupied by

the brethren. "The King's tenants were expelled; the vacant dormitories were again peopled; the refectories were again filled with exulting faces." "The Abbey of Sawley, which had been vacant since the 14th of May, and which had been with all its moveables sold to Lord Darcy for close upon £400, was again occupied by the abbot and his twenty-one brethren, and being the charitable relief of those parts, and standing in a mountain and among three forests, the men of Craven, Kendal, Furness, and the districts bound themselves together to resist any attempt to seize it from the monks a second time." [1]

John Paslew, Abbot of Whalley, became implicated in the insurrection, and was in consequence attainted of high treason. Father Gasquet asserts, on the evidence of Nicholas Tempest, that the oath of the insurgents was extorted from the monks by violence. Tempest gave evidence that he went to Whalley Abbey "with three or four hundred men," and "being kept out about two hours were at last let in for fear of burning their barns and houses. And then this examinat swore the abbot and about eight of his religion according to Aske's oath."

The Abbot of Whalley does not appear to have taken any active part in the rising. But he was tried at Lancaster with two of his monks, John Eastgate and William Haydock, and William Trafford, Abbot of Sawley, and convicted of high treason. The Abbot of Sawley was hanged at Lancaster on March 10, 1536-7, and his brother abbot, with Eastgate, by a refinement of cruelty, was brought to Whalley, and

[1] Gasquet, *Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries*, ii. 107-8.

executed two days later within sight of the monastery over which he had presided for thirty years. The other monk suffered the same punishment the following day, in a field a few miles from his monastery, where his body was left hanging for some time.

The possessions of the monastery were confiscated, and in 1537 the receiver had sold goods and got in rents to the value of £957 11*s.* 7*d.* The monks of Whalley, however, inasmuch as the convent was considered to be involved in the attainder of their head, were refused any pension.

Three years later (1539) the suppression of the greater monasteries took place. Father Gasquet, in his great work on *Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries*, has asserted that "anything like general immorality was altogether unknown among the religious of England," and he goes on to prove that the reports of Cromwell's Visitors, representing the religious houses as being in the worst possible state of moral degradation, are not founded on fact. The Chester Records hardly bear out this statement. The number of "capellani" in Chester alone reported for offences is far too large in proportion to the population, and the character and frequent repetition of the offences by the same individuals, indicates a grave laxity of discipline and depraved moral sense in the ecclesiastical authorities. The Carmelite Friars especially were guilty of riotous conduct amongst themselves, and towards the citizens, roaming about the city after curfew, armed, to the terror of the peaceful inhabitants. The Dominicans were far too frequently involved in riots and acts of violence.

The brethren in the Benedictine Monastery were repeatedly indicted for violence and insult to the citizens, and it is remarkable how the riotous and disorderly conduct of the monk in assaulting and robbing the Superior of his convent should, in more than one instance, have been no disqualification for promotion to the headship of the abbey, and that despite such disgraceful conduct, the offender should be the immediate successor to the abbot so ill-treated.

Nevertheless, such cases as might be instanced by no means warrant "the destruction of so many hallowed and beautiful buildings, the scattering of so many valuable libraries, the secularizing of so many sacred sepulchres." The waste and extravagance of the transaction are without excuse. The contents of the houses were sold almost without reserve, the sites granted or sold for a mere trifle to laymen, and everything done hurriedly and unsparingly to prevent "the rooks coming back to their nest and building again."

The form of surrender, which was nearly the same in most cases, was drawn up to make it appear that it was a voluntary act, "without coaction, but for very poverty," and concluding with an appeal to the King's grace to be good and gracious, the signatories hoping thus to secure some pittance for life. But this was a vain hope. In some cases the brethren were fortunate in obtaining help. The Warden of the Friars Minor (Dr. Wall) became a Prebendary of the new Cathedral of St. Werburgh's; the Prioress of St. Mary's, Chester, and her sister nuns received good pensions. But the great majority of the dispossessed

had to be content with a few shillings, and were turned out into the world to find their own living as best they might. This was especially difficult. Not only had they been objects of dislike to the bishops for their defiance of authority, and to the secular clergy for their intermeddling in their parishes, but the destruction of so many churches at the time diminished the possibility of obtaining any cure of souls.

The following is the form which was signed :

"M^d. thys xv day of August in ye xxx yere of Kynge Henry the VIII. whe the prior and convente of the black fryers in West Chester without any coaccyon or consell but for very poverte have and do resyne our house with all that to yt belonge In to the handds of the Lord Vysytor to the Kyng's use : beseycheynge his grace to be goode and gracyous to us. In wytenes to thys byll whe subscrybe our nomys with our proper handds the day and yere before wryttyn

Frater Hugo Brecknocke prior ibidem prefato die.
Frater Joh'es Sargent sub-prior
Frater Joh'es Byrd
Frater Robert Romesay
Frater David Griffith."

A similar document was signed by the Warden and Convent of Grey Friars, seven in number; and by those of White Friars, who numbered ten.

The records of the Visitations amply show the "*plumbi fames*" which possessed Cromwell's Visitors, while they afford an interesting insight into the comparative prosperity of the several churches. In

Chester, after the abbey, which possessed its full complement of copes and vestments and tunicles, cloth of gold, velvet and purple tyssho, chalices and patens, and a crysmatory, the Church of St. Mary on the Hill had the finest collection of vestments and ornaments, valued at £10 14*s.* 6*d.*, being one-third of the whole valuation in the city of Chester. Trinity Church had vestments, etc. to the value of £6 11*s.*, St. Peter's 24*s.*, while those at St. Martin's and St. Olaves', and the Hospital of St. John and Spital Boughton, are certified to be of so small value that they were by the commissioners given to the poor of the parish.

The following inventory of Church goods in Wirral, 3 Edward VI., shows the bareness and poverty to which the parish churches were reduced by the rapacity of the King's courtiers.

Kyrkeby Walley [Wallasey] ii chaless, a ringe of iii belles
Burton, one chaless, a ringe of ii belles
Stoke, one chaless, a ringe of iii belles
Bakfort, ii chaless, a ringe of iii belles
Shotwycke, one chaless, a ringe of iii belles
Brombroghe, one chales, a ringe of ii belles
Wodchurche, iii chales, a ringe of iii belles
Neston, one chales with a paten, a ringe of ii belles
Heswall, one chalis with a ringe of iii belles
Bebbynton, ii challes with a ringe of iii belles
Overchurch (Upton) one chales with a ringe of ii belles

Thursteston, one chales with a ringe ——
Moreton Chapell, one chales with a ringe of i belle
West Kyrkeby, ii chales with a ringe of iii belles
Estham, ii chales with a ringe of ii belles
Byddeston, one chales with a ringe of iii belles.

CHAPTER VI

Foundation of the Bishopric of Chester—Its extent—John Bird first bishop of the new diocese — Dr. George Cotes — Cuthbert Scott—Visitation articles—Changes in ritual.

Two years after the surrender of the Abbey of St. Werburgh, Henry VIII. by his letters patent, dated at Walden, August 4, 1541, founded within the site of the dissolved monastery an episcopal see and cathedral church for a bishop, dean, and six prebendaries. The church was ordered to be thenceforth styled the Church of Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary. The King annexed to the Bishopric the Archdeaconries of Richmond and Chester then lately resigned to the King by William Knyght, Doctor of Laws,[1] and placed the entire see within the province of Canterbury. A special portion of the abbey buildings was granted as a palace for the Bishops of Chester, the rest of the site and precincts of the abbey being granted to the

[1] Dr. Knight, Secretary of State to Henry VII. and Henry VIII., was appointed Archdeacon of Chester in 1522, and Archdeacon of Richmond in 1529, the revenue of the former amounting to £77 10*s*. On his consecration in 1541 to the see of Bath and Wells, he surrendered both archdeaconries to the King.

chapter, the first members being Thomas Clerk, dean; William Wall, Nicholas Bucksey, Thomas Newton, John Huet, Thomas Radford, and Roger Smyth, prebendaries. By a subsequent Act of Parliament passed in 1542, the see of Chester was placed within the province of York, for the reason that the Archbishop of Canterbury hath a sufficient number of dioceses and suffragans under him and in his province, and the Archbishop of York hath only two suffragans, and also by reason of the long journey of almost three hundred miles from some places in the Archdeaconry of Richmond, "intollerable fatigation and importable charges."

The Bishopric of Chester continued to be for many reigns so poor that the bishops had a difficulty in maintaining due Episcopal hospitality, and were allowed to hold other preferment *in commendam*.

The dean and chapter were endowed by the King in 1546 with the residue of the lands and estates of St. Werburgh's Abbey. The charter granting this endowment was unfortunately void owing to the omission of the word "Cestriæ" after "concedimus decano et ecclesiæ Christi et beatæ Mariæ Virginis." Notwithstanding this omission, the dean and chapter continued to receive the rents for a considerable time as if the lands had been properly granted. But in the first year of Edward VI., Dean Cliffe and two of the prebendaries were imprisoned in the Fleet by the procurement of Sir Richard Cotton, Controller of the King's household, and under intimidation granted to him most of their lands for the yearly rent of £603 17*s.*, the old rent being above £700. Walker, the next

dean, opposed this grant on the grounds of insufficiency of rent, manifest compulsion, and the act not having been that of the entire body. After a long dispute, in which the Earl of Leicester is stated to have been influenced by bribes from the fee-farmers, the lands were confirmed to the latter, subject to certain rents, which have been continuously paid to the dean and chapter, but which have remained stationary, whilst other landed revenues are increased in value.

The diocese which was constituted by the order of Henry VIII. was of enormous extent, including large portions of seven counties, and equal in area to four counties of average size. Besides the county of Chester, the new bishop's jurisdiction extended over the whole county of Lancaster, including that northern part of it which lies on the sea beyond Morecambe Bay; over the county of Westmoreland as far as Shap Fells, which belonged to the Barony of Kendal; that part of Yorkshire which was formerly called Richmondshire; as well as certain parishes in Flintshire and Denbighshire in North Wales.

It was divided into two archdeaconries—Chester and Richmond, the archdeacons receiving a fixed stipend of £50 each, but having no jurisdiction, which the bishop retained in his own power. The Archdeaconry of Chester comprised the whole of Cheshire, with that part of Lancashire which lies between the Mersey and the Ribble,[1] and the parishes in Wales. It was divided into twelve deaneries—

[1] In Domesday the lands which lie between the Ribble and the Mersey are reckoned in Cestersciré.

Chester, Wirral, Bangor, Malpas, Nantwich, Middlewich, Macclesfield, Frodsham, Manchester, Warrington, Blackburn, and Leland.

The Archdeaconry of Richmond included the rest of Lancashire (north of the Ribble) and certain districts of Yorkshire, Cumberland, and Westmoreland. These were arranged in eight deaneries—Amounderness, Lonsdale, Kendal, Furness, Copeland, Richmond, Catterick, Boroughbridge.

The parishes in Lancashire were in many cases of enormous extent. Lancashire as late as the fourteenth century was thinly peopled and ill-cultivated. "In the south-eastern parts extensive mosses and fens scarcely allowed pathway for travellers, much less pasturage or cornfields. A great part of the eastern central and northern districts consisted of mountain and moorland, in which the climate was bleak and the soil bare and unpromising."

Dense forests covered large tracts of the great parish of Manchester. A forest of oak, elm, birch, and thick underwood stretched over the lands of Boughton, Cheetham, and Blackley, and eastward over most of Bradford, Openshaw, and Gorton. The establishment of religious houses did much to alter the face of the country. The growth of manufactures and trade, especially in the south-eastern parts, produced a still greater change. Manchester became so thriving that in Henry VIII.'s reign the doubtful privilege of sanctuary was transferred to Chester, "because the sanctuary men are prejudicial to the wealth, credit, great occupyings, and good order of the said town by occasioning idleness, unlawful games,

unthriftiness, and other enormities." Bolton, Blackburn, Ashton, Oldham, and Rochdale shared in this manufacturing prosperity. But Liverpool consisted in 1565 of only 138 inhabited houses, most of them built in seven streets between its humble chapel and its ancient castle.

The ecclesiastical arrangements, however, did not keep pace with the growth in population or wealth. The parishes continued to be undivided. The chantries had supplied to some extent the deficiencies of the parochial clergy. When these were abolished "the people, deprived of their old pastors, and neglected by their new ones, were left in a state of ignorance and vice fearful to contemplate," and many of the extensive parishes of Lancashire, which even at that time ought to have been sub-divided, and their chapels competently endowed and supplied with our admirable parochial system and the reformed liturgy, were deliberately left without any clergy.

On the suppression of the chantries in 1548 the number of the clergy in Manchester, including the chantry-priests, amounted to twenty-two ; in Winwick parish to fourteen; in Blackburn to the same number, and in Preston to eleven. At Bishop Downham's visitation in 1562 there were not more than two or three clergymen in each of the large parishes in his diocese, and the greater part of the old chapels, with their wide chapelries, had not even one.

King Henry was successful in finding a very able man to administer this huge diocese. This was John Bird, a member of an old Cheshire family, born about 1480. He was a friar of the order of Carmelites,

or White Friars. Of this body he was elected Provincial at the early age of thirty-six (in 1516), for the usual period of three years, and for a second time after a like interval of three years, in 1532, this second election to a post of such distinction and responsibility bearing witness to his reputation among the brethren of the English Province, which then numbered no less than fifty-two houses. To this qualification of experience in discipline and direction there was added some considerable knowledge of episcopal duties, and acquaintance with the clergy of his future see, for in 1537 John Bird was consecrated by Cranmer as suffragan of Rowland Lee, Bishop of Lichfield, with the title of Bishop of Penrith. For the two or three years which elapsed between this appointment and his elevation to the episcopal throne at Bangor, he was entrusted with the chief management of the enormous Mercian bishopric, because the Bishop of Lichfield, in his capacity of President of the Marches of Wales, lived mostly at Ludlow, and was unable to give much personal attention to the needs of the diocese. He is regarded as a man of flexible opinions, prepared always to swim with the tide, and he therefore, as might be expected, was found a useful agent by the King in civil and ecclesiastical affairs. Thus he was sent to confer and argue with the reformer Thomas Bilney, in 1531, before his execution. Four years later he was joined with Bishop Fox and Thomas Bedyl in a commission, which endeavoured to persuade Katherine of Aragon to renounce the style and title of Queen for that of "Princess Dowager and widow of Prince

Arthur." In 1539, when he was Bishop Suffragan of Penrith, he was engaged once more in the King's matrimonial concerns, and sent on an embassy to Germany to negotiate the marriage with Anne of Cleves; and the following year, after he had been promoted to the see of Bangor, he was complaisant enough to subscribe in Convocation the decree in favour of repudiating the very marriage which he had been to a great extent instrumental in bringing about. This same complaisance and easy principle he manifested in his own matrimonial affairs. After his translation to Chester in 1541 he took to himself a wife, though well stricken in years, but on being deprived of his bishopric by Queen Mary on the ground of being a married man, he promptly repudiated his wife, and tried hard, but in vain, to induce the Queen to allow him to retain his see.

The same want of principle was shown in his religious views. He was one of the most active in carrying out the orders of the Privy Council of Edward VI. about the alteration of the Church Services, and in connection with the Commission appointed, 7 Edward VI., to take an inventory of the goods and ornaments of the churches in his diocese, he was instrumental in seizing a large quantity of plate and jewels belonging to different churches in his diocese, which he sent to London as spoil to satisfy the insatiable greed of the courtly reformers. Thus in the city of Chester, copes and tunicles of cloth of gold, rich vestments of "grene and red and purple tyssho," chalices, pattens, jewelled crosses and "crysmatories," and bells were all swept

off from the churches and sold nominally for the King's Majesty's use, but actually for the benefit of the King's counsellors, those ornaments alone being excepted as being "of so smalle value that they were distributed unto the poore." The total sum of the ornaments, copes, vestments, and goods in the churches of Chester sold by the commissioners amounted to £30 1*s.* 1*d.* It is stated in Harl. MSS. 2150, 268, that on August 10, 1 Queen Elizabeth, John Byrd, Byshopp, and Thomas Tayler, Clarke, were indicted for taking a wooden crucifix out of St. Oswald's Church (a part of St. Werburgh's Cathedral), but there seems some difficulty about the date, as Bishop Bird was buried at Great Dunmow in October 15, 1558, quite a month before Elizabeth succeeded to the throne.

Having been in King Henry's time a strenuous supporter of and preacher for the King's supremacy, he signalized himself in the next reign by publishing strong controversial treatises on "Justification by Faith," and "Against the Mass and Transubstantiation." When Queen Mary came to the throne, he was quite prepared to be "made of a young Protestant an old Catholic," but this pliancy did not save him from being ejected from the see of Chester. It is stated that he owed to the Crown the large sum of £1087, and he was fain to appeal to Bishop Bonner of London for some place of emolument, bringing with him, as a present, a dish of apples and a bottle of wine. He alleged that he had married against his will, "to flatter with the time," and his representations were so plausible as to induce Bonner to

appoint him his suffragan, and present him to the living of Great Dunmow in Essex, where he died in 1558. Bale, also a Carmelite friar, who had approved highly of his proceedings in Edward VI.'s reign, termed him later, in his *Exposition on the Apocalypse*, one of the ten horns. We learn from the not very flattering picture drawn of him by Fox, that he had "but one eye."

The following particulars from the Churchwardens' Accounts of St. Mary's on the Hill, Chester, indicate the changes in ritual which took place just before and during John Bird's episcopate. The early entries illustrate the way in which the clergy educated the people by exhibiting to them the great mysteries of religion symbolically. Thus in 1536 there are payments for "two cordys to the pascall," *i. e.* the large candlestick used at Easter, "nayles, pynes, and thred to heng the (Easter) sepulcur," for "sepulchre lights." At Christmas, besides a special decoration of holly called the "hollies" (or holyn) with candles stuck in it, there was some kind of scenic arrangement, in which the moon and stars figured prominently. Thus, in 1540, "paide for nayles and tymber to make the mone under the holyn," and "paide for hanging the roppe in the pulle (pulley) for the holyn," and "for making a skaffolde to take down the mone." Also, in 1544, "paid for candles to ye sterr and to ye holyn." In 1539 there is a curious entry "for settyng uppe and schestyng (chesting) the holy goste," and in 1540, "paide for wyre to sett uppe the holy goste," by which is meant the figure of a dove symbolizing the Holy Ghost. There are several entries in these

years of payment for frankincense, and sergesses or large wax candles weighing 20 lbs. each. In 1539 the churchwardens are engaged in raising up the high altar, and when it was completed they entertained their neighbours at the cost to the parish of fourpence. The holy water stock was set up this year.

In 1543 occur the entries, "For fylling of the fonte, ij*d.*;" and "for tymber boght to make the pylpyt, xx*d.*; item unto the kerver (carver) for makyng of pylpyd and the grese (steps) to the same, viij*s.*; for workeyng of a star [stair] under the pylpyd, ij*d.*" The pulpit the following year was ornamented, for viij*d.* is paid to "the carver for settynge flowres on ye pulpitt."

In 1544 we have the first reference to the Bible, when "a cheyne to the Byble" was paid for.

Several entries occur of the repairing and gilding of crosses for carrying in procession. "For iiij newe procession boks for ye qwere xij*d.*" is paid. Frequent payments are made by husbands for "kneeling places," not for themselves but for their wives, the price being usually xij*d.* There are occasional references to the rood-loft, but in 1547 the holy rood was taken down, and in the same year we have the first record of "white-liming" or white-washing the church, in order to get rid of any paintings or other ornamentation that might be on the walls. Following on this, other indications occur of the progress of the Reformation. In 1549 a Book for the Communion and two Psalters, and the "Paraphrases" are purchased by the wardens, while in the next year the lead from the holy water stocke is sold for five shillings, the altars are taken down, and the

church floor tiled at considerable cost. A further sum was expended on mending the glass windows, in which the old stained glass, with inscriptions beseeching prayers for the souls of those who had given them, had probably been broken.

In 1552 the wardens pay vij*s.* for the "newe comenean boke that was boght last," and xij*d.* to Sir Wylliam "for byndynge and cordyng of the same boke," and xx*d.* to the same "for mendyng of the bybull boke and for the coveryng of the same," as well as iiij*d.* "for a skyne for coveryng of the same boke." In 1553, when Queen Mary had succeeded her brother, xvj*d.* is "paid to the carvar for a frame to the tabull of the hee (high) altar," and xx*d.* for "gyllydynge of a nemyche (an image) of owre lade (lady), 6*d.* for setting up the angell."[1] Gathered in the parish towards the "payeinge for the makyng of the rode, 8*s.* 4*d.*;" this cost 12*s.*, for "gilding the rode, 13*s.*" Paid "for the holy water bockytt" 3*s.* 3*d.*, and "the berege for leynge up of the alltar *stone*, ij*d.*"

The great change had come. The Prayer-book as used in the time of Edward VI. was proscribed by Proclamation, and all copies of it were "within fifteen days (where such books remain) to be brought or delivered to the Ordinary, at the said Ordinary's will and disposition to be burnt."

Bishop John Bird was then this Ordinary, but though he with all haste sent off his wife, and renounced "Protestant" tenets, he had to give place to a man of sterner stuff, Dr. GEORGE COTES, one of the

[1] In 1556, this is "Payd for the Angell that the sacrament ys in, xiij*d.*"

prebendaries of his cathedral. Born in Yorkshire, he was elected in 1522 a Probationary Fellow of Balliol, and afterwards a Fellow of Magdalen. He continued for several years his residence at Oxford, being Proctor in 1531, and Master of Balliol from 1539 to 1545, always a champion of the "old learning." He was consecrated Bishop of Chester on April 1, 1554, by Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, Archbishop Cranmer being in the Tower, and the Archbishopric of York remaining still vacant. The ceremony (of which a contemporary account has been preserved) took place in the church of St. Mary Overies, five other bishops being consecrated on the same occasion, viz. John White, Warden of Winchester, to the see of Lincoln; Gilbert Bourne to Bath; Henry Morgan to St. David's; James Brooks to Gloucester; and Maurice Griffin to Rochester. "All was performed with extraordinary state and ceremony, the church hung with cloth of arras and other costly carpets, and the Te Deum Laudamus excellently sung."

Bishop Cotes was allowed to hold the moiety of the Rectory of Cotgrave, Nottinghamshire, *in commendam*, because the revenues of Chester were insufficient to support the dignity of the episcopal office. He was present in Parliament when both Houses decided by a formal vote to return to the Roman obedience, and received on their knees from Cardinal Pole as legate the absolution which freed the land from the guilt incurred by its schism. He preached a sermon at St. Paul's Cross on December 16, the subject being "of the blessyd Sacrement of the Auter." It was his misfortune to be the chief

agent in passing sentence of death upon George Marsh, the only victim in the diocese of Chester who suffered during Dr. Cotes' episcopate the atrocity of stake and faggot. George Marsh was a native of Dean near Bolton in Lancashire, and was ordained about 1542. He was arrested for his "Protestant" teaching at Smithell's Hall, near Bolton, and sent to Lathom House to be tried by the Earl of Derby. By him he was committed to Lancaster Gaol, but was afterwards removed to Chester, where he was examined for the second time in the Lady Chapel. He was burned at the Spital, Boughton. Considerable feeling was shown in Chester in his favour, and one of the sheriffs, Mr. John Cowper, attempted a rescue, but he was beaten off by the other sheriffs, and obliged to make his way into Wales. Marsh's bones were collected by sympathizers and buried in St. Giles' burial-ground. It is stated that Bishop Cotes preached a sermon in the cathedral, declaring that Marsh was a heretic, burnt like a heretic, and was firebrand in hell. This martyrdom took place on April 24, 1555, and in a few months (in December of the same year) Bishop Cotes followed him to the grave—according to Dr. Bliss "a good man and a most learned divine, only possessed with an overwarm zeal for his religion."

His successor, CUTHBERT SCOTT, was still more forward in resisting the spread of the reformed doctrines. Elected a Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1537, after some years' absence in Yorkshire as a parish priest, he returned to his university in 1553, on his appointment to the Mastership of Christ's College. He had acquired a great reputation as a theologian,

and in 1554 was selected as one of the representatives of Cambridge University on the Royal Commission to dispute with Archbishop Cranmer and Bishops Ridley and Latimer. Two years later, just before his nomination to the see of Chester, April 2, 1556, he was one of "a great rout of Popish doctors before whom John Hullier was tried for heresy at St. Mary's, Cambridge, and condemned to the fire." In the next year he was placed at the head of a commission to visit his university for the purpose of extirpating any traces of heresy, and as such he was concerned, still more unhappily than his predecessor, in an infamous act of persecution, an extraordinary ceremony which illustrates the bitter feeling engendered at the time by religious differences. Bucer, once Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, had been buried in St. Mary's, and Fagius, a distinguished Hebraist, in St. Michael's Church. These churches were laid under an interdict, as being defiled with the bodies of heretics. "The two dead men were publicly cited to appear before the Visitors either personally or by proxy. The citations were duly affixed to the public buildings, and after being cited three several times at the successive sittings of the Commission, of course without appearing, they were pronounced guilty of heresy, and the Bishop of Chester, after an address to the court, which included the Vice-Chancellor and all the regents and other members of the university, as well as the mayor, aldermen, and council, read from a scroll the sentence. Their bodies were to be disinterred; they were to be degraded from holy orders, and handed over to the secular arm to be burnt. This sentence was carried

out on the 6th of February; the bodies were carried into the market-place, and there the coffins set on end and chained to a stake and burned to ashes.

St. Mary's Church was hallowed on the following Sunday by Bishop Scott. "He first hallowed a large tub of water, into which he put salt, ashes, and wine, and going round the outside of the church once, and inside thrice, he sprinkled the building with the consecrated water, concluding with a sermon." He appears to have been an eminent preacher, for he was appointed to preach at Paul's Cross on February 6, 1558 (soon after the loss of Calais, and apparently in connection with that national calamity), before the Lord Mayor and Corporation, many judges, and sixteen bishops.

When Queen Elizabeth succeeded to the throne, Bishop Scott stoutly opposed her measures, speaking especially against the Royal Supremacy and the new Prayer-book. He took part in a conference between the body of reformers (who had just returned from their exile) and the bishops under the Lord Keeper Bacon as moderator. The result of the conference was that the champions of "the old learning" were fined: the Bishop of Lichfield in the heavy sum of £333 6*s.* 8*d.*; Carlisle £250; Chester £133 6*s.* 8*d.*; Dr. Cole, Dean of St. Paul's, 500 marks; Dr. Harpsfield £40; and Dr. Chedsey 40 marks. On June 21, 1559, he was deprived as a recusant; and on May 13, 1560, being adjudged a "forward person," he was committed to the Fleet. There he remained for four years, but being released on certain terms, he escaped to Belgium, and died at Louvain in 1565.

The Visitation Articles of 1554, 1556, and 1557

will throw some light upon the condition of parishes, and the ornaments, etc. considered necessary, during the episcopate of Bishop Cotes and Bishop Scott.

A large proportion of churches, with nave and chancel, are reported to need repair; the windows in many requiring to be glazed; the churchyard negligently kept, and overrun with swine and other beasts seeking for pasture. This is the case with Christleton, Burton, Mynshull, Wrenbury, Aston, Chelford, Hanmer, Bartomley, Wallasey, Frodsham, Stoke, Wyburnbury, Holme, Great Budworth, Grappenhall, Sanbach, Middlewich, Lawton, Gostree, Bowdon, Bebington, Heswall, Neston, Bunbury, Prestbury, Mobberley, Mottram, Wigan, Ashton, Walton, Warrington, Leyland, Standish, Croston, Chorley, Prescott, Huyton, Northmeoles, Legh, Sutton, Churchkirk, Woodchurch, Dersbury. Neston, both in 1554 and again in 1557, is reported to be without a lych-gate.

Several are stated to lack all the ornaments; Weverham, Upper and Lower Peover, Heswall, Colne, Rostorn, Bowdon. In Wyburnbury the altars are not built, the windows not glazed, the prescribed books wanting, and the churchyard in a ruinous condition. Ince, Churton, Walton, Stoke, Bebington, Runcorn, Frodsham, Deane, Bolton, Flixton, Mynshull, Heswall, and Wrenbury have no image of the Crucified One hanging before the high altar. Sanbach, Halsall, Northmeoles, Eccleston (Chester), and Runcorn have none of the books as directed. Warrington is also in need of vestments; Burton wants an amice and a surplice; and the churchwardens of St. Mary's on the Hill, Chester, are admonished to

"find a cope, a vestment, a banner, a picture of the Cross bie St. James' Day." In Rosthorne there are "wanting: Imprimis, a paxe; Item, an albe; Item, a vayle. Item, the high altar ys to be repayred, and not dycent. Item, the chansell ys owt of reparation, both ye wyndowes and the rouffe. The Churche ys owt of reparatyon, both the wyndow and the rouffe. Worthinburie has no surplice for the holy water clerk." In Eccleston (Leyland Deanery) the rector is presented for having no curate; Anthony Leyton for carrying off two altars; and James Collinge and Richard Debdale for taking away three great candelabra lately hanging in the nave of the church. William Thompson also took away the figure of the Crucified One; and at St. Oswald's, Chester, Geoffrey Huxley carried off part of the tabernacle in spite of the churchwardens. At Thornton one Gilbert User disturbed the service by striking the bells while the curate was in the pulpit. At Dodleston one Nicholas Granend created a disturbance with his drawn sword, and was punished with a fine and two days' penance. At Holt six persons were presented in 1557 for disturbing the congregation during sermon time.

Complaints are made of "chiding" in the churchyard (at Rossendale), of buying and selling there during service time, and making the churchyard a common market (at Sefton, Croston, and Prescott), of beasts feeding there (at Liverpool).

Mention begins to be made of "Sacramentaries"[1] at Liverpool, Prestwich, Bolton, Rochdale, Bartomley.

[1] Absentant se a divinis; sunt sacramentarii et spreverunt eucharistiam.

At Mylnegate, Thomas Voile is presented for retaining possession of an English Bible. He confesses to have done so, but says that he has sold it. He is fined 10*s.* 6*d.*

At Aston, William Cleyton is presented for disturbing divine service, and not receiving the consecrated bread (*panem servatum*) or the holy water. Eight persons are reported in St. Peter's, Chester, for not frequenting their parish church, and one, Robert Hill, for working during divine service on Sundays and holy days. In St. Michael's parish, George Binson is fined 6*d.* for the same offence, and for offering his goods for sale; and Nicholas Buvins, a shoemaker, and five others admit that all of the same occupation "do sett open their shoppes untill ix. of the clocke opon holidaies." There are three like charges at Wigan.

The bulk of the presentments, however, consists of offences against morality—fornication, adultery, or disagreement between husband and wife, or wrangling between neighbours. Witton, Astbury, Middlewich, Wigan, Farndon, and Colne have far the highest number of offenders in the first-named category. The penalty was, in addition to a fine to be paid to ecclesiastical uses, viz. for the repair of the church fabric, in one case Chester Cathedral, or the mending of the high-roads, public penance to be performed by both parties. This penance was to be done in the parish church, for two, three, or even four successive Sundays. The penitents, wearing a long linen shroud, with a placard on their breast detailing the offence, and walking up the church, barefooted and bareheaded, and carrying a lighted candle, were re-

quired to kneel down during the Litany, and there remain after the reading of a homily, and ask pardon of God. One unhappy creature was required to do such penance on six days : twice in Colne parish church, twice in Bryndley [*sic* for Burnley], and twice in the new church of Pendle. At Padiham, in 1557, eight days' penance were enjoined : two at Padiham, two at Colne, two at Samsburye [Samlesbury], and two at Clitheroe. A fine of 16*s.* 4*d.* was also imposed, for the repair of Chester Cathedral. At Preston one offender convicted of adultery, besides performing penance on three successive Sundays, was ordered to appear in penitential garb in the market-place on the Saturday before the third Sunday.

It is noteworthy, in connection with the later prosecutions for witchcraft, that in 1556 at Altham, in the Blackburn deanery, William Dunerdill and Jeneta his wife were presented for fortune-telling, *propter divinacionem.*

PROCURACIONES GEORGII [COTES] EP[ISCOPI], 1554.

Decanatus Cestrie.

St. Peter, 2*s.* ; St. Oswald, 6*s.* 8*d.* ; Trinity, 4*s.* 4*d.* ; St. Mary, 10*s.* ; Eccleston, 3*s.* 4*d.* ; Pulford, 2*s.* ; Doddleston, 4*s.* ; Waverton, 6*s.* 8*d.* ; Cristilton, 8*s.* ; Torpurley, 8*s.* ; Plemistowe, 6*s.* ; Thornton, 6*s.* 8*d.* ; Ince, 6*s.* 8*d.* ; Capella de Bruera, 3*s.* 4*d.*

Dec. Wirrall.

Shotwik, 3*s.* 8*d.* ; Neston, 6*s.* 8*d.* ; Heswall, 6*s.* 10*d.* ; Thurstaston, 20*d.* ; Kyrkbe, 6*s.* 11*d.* ; Walizeye, 7*s.* 4*d.* ; Bebington, 8*s.* 4*d.* ; Estham cum Brombrogh app., 10*s.* 11*d.* ; Stoke, 4*s.* ; Bacford, 3*s.* 6*d.* ; Woodchirch, 7*s.* 6*d.* ; Bidstone, 3*s.* 8*d.*

Dec. Malpas.

Malpas, 20*s.*; Tatnall, 6*s.* 8*d.*; Tilston, 6*s.* 8*d.*; Codington, 3*s.* 4*d.*; Handley, 3*s.* 4*d.*; Aldford, 6*s.* 8*d.*

Dec. Bangor.

Bangor, 10*s.*; Hanmere, 10*s.*

Dec. Frodsham.

Frodsham, 8*s.*; Ronckornet Budworth, 25*s.* 4*d.*; Weverham, 6*s.* 8*d.*; Rostorn, 9*s.* 4*d.*; Bawdon, 10*s.*; Lyme et W'burton, 4*s.*; Grapnall, 2*s.* 8*d.*

Dec. Vici Malbani.

Acton, 32*s.*; Bertumleye, 10*s.*; Aldlem, 10*s.*; Bunburie, 13*s.* 4*d.*

Dec. Medio Vico.

Astbury, 10*s.*; Medii Vici, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Sonbage, 7*s.* 6*d.*; Vicaria Eiusdem, 3*s.*; Davenham, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Swetnam, 2*s.*; Lawton, 20*d.*; Brerton, 20*d.*; Warmenham, 6*s.* 8*d.*

Dec. Macclesfeld.

Moberleye, 6*s.* 8*d.*; Taxall, 3*s.* 4*d.*; Gawsworth, 12*d.*; Presburie, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Chedill, 10*s.*; Mottram, 6*s.* 8*d.*; Alderley, 6*s.* 8*d.*; Wilmslowe, 6*s.* 8*d.*; Northen, 6*s.* 8*d.*; Stopford, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Vicaria de Mottram, 3*s.* 4*d.*

Dec. Mamicestrie.

Bolton, 12*s.* 4*d.*; Eccles, 10*s.* 4*d.*; Prestwich, 10*s.* 6*d.*; Burie, 7*s.* 2*d.*; Medilton, 7*s.* 2*d.*; Rachdall, 10*s.* 4*d.*; Ashton, 5*s.* 6*d.*; Flixton, 7*s.*; Radcliff, 3*s.* 4*d.*

Sūm. £3 13*s.* 8*d.*

Dec. Blagburn.

Whalley, 40*s.*; Blagburne, 26*s.* 8*d.*

Dec. Werington.

Werington, 6*s.* 8*d.*; Winweke, 10*s.*; Legh, 6*s.* 8*d.*; Wigan, 10*s.*; Ormskirke, 10*s.*; Halsall, 6*s.* 8*d.*; Aghton, 3*s.* 4*d.*; Sefton, 10*s.*; Walton, 10*s.*; Childwall, 6*s.* 8*d.*; Huyten, 3*s.* 4*d.*; Prescott, 6*s.* 8*d.*; Northmelis, 3*s.* 4*d.*

Dec. Leylande.

Standish, 12*s.* 8*d.*; Leyland, 12*s.* 8*d.*; Penwortham,

12*s.* 8*d.*; Croston, 12*s.* 8*d.*; Eccleston, 12*s.* 8*d.*; Brynhull, 3*s.* 4*d.*

Archid. Richmond'.

Dec. Andernes [Amounderness].

Litham, 3*s.*; Kirkham, 20*s.*; Mich's [Michael's], 13*s.* 4*d.*; Cokerham, 6*s.* 8*d.*; Ribchester, 10*s.*; Cheping, 10*s.*; Preston, 20*s.*; Garstange, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Lanc[aster], 26*s.* 8*d.*; Pulton, 13*s.* 4*d.*

Dec. Lonsdall.

Clapam, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Thornton, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Sedbart, 20*s.*; Lonsdale, 20*s.*; Wetington, 6*s.* 8*d.*; Tunstall, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Bentham, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Tatham, 5*s.*; Mellen, 20*s.*; Claghton, 5*s.*

Dec. Fornes [Furness].

Cartmell, ——; Ulverston, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Pennengton, 4*s.*; Urswike, 10*s.*; Aldingham, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Dalton, 10*s.*; Kirkbeirelith.

Dec. Cowpland.

Millome, 20*s.*; Witingham, 10*s.*; Whitbecke, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Botill, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Corney, 6*s.*; Walberwaith, 5*s.*; Mulcaster, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Dregg, 5*s.*; Gosforth, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Irton, 6*s.* 8*d.*; Ponsbie, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Bekermett, 13*s.* 6½*d.*; Cleter, 12*s.*; Egremond, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Haill, 6*s.* 8*d.*; Synt Bees *nill* Morsbe, 6*s.* 8*d.*; Distington, 5*s.*; Haveryngham, 6*s.* 8*d.*; Workington, 20*s.*; Brigham, 20*s.*; Deane, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Lampluff, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Arleckden, 13*s.* 4*d.* £13 13*s.* 2*d.*

Dec. Kendall.

Kendall, 20*s.*; Ev'sham, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Bethn, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Burton, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Waverton, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Bolton, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Heisham, 5*s.*; Halton, 5*s.*

Dec. Richmond.

Gilling, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Brignall, 10*s.*; Danbie, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Melsambie, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Barnyngham, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Richmonde, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Aynderbie, 20*s.*; Stretforth, 6*s.* 8*d.*; Langton, 10*s.*; Kirkbe ravenswath, 10*s.*; Croffe, 20*s.*; Smeton, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Magna cooton, 13*s.* 4*d.*;

Marske, 10*s.*; Romdalkirk, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Wicliff, 10*s.*; Rokbe, 6*s.* 8*d.*; Manfeld, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Medilton tias, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Kirkbe super Wiske, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Grynton, 13*s.* 4*d.*

Dec. Borogrigis.

Knavisbrogh, 20*s.*; Ripleye, 20*s.*; Goldysbrogh, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Hunsingor, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Hamerton, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Alverton Maliuerley, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Wixley, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Ffernham, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Copgraue, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Staveley, 6*s.* 8*d.*; Marton, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Kirkbe super mora, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Cundall, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Magna Usburn, 13*s.* 4*d.*

Dec. Caterick.

Wensley, 20*s.*; Estwitton, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Aiskerth, 20*s.*; Coverham, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Middilham, 10*s.*; Thornton Steward, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Fingall, 20*s.*; Walchowse, 20*s.*; Tautfeld, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Kyrkleten, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Scruton, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Burneston, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Bedall, 20*s.*; Downham, 6*s.* 8*d.*; Kyrkbefletam, 6*s.* 8*d.*; Hawkiswell, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Spenethorn, 20*s.*; Brompton, 20*s.*; Catarike, 20*s.*; Waith, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Well *pro cur'*, 13*s.* 4*d.*; Pickhall, 20*s.*

NOTE.—The above list is valuable as furnishing the names of parishes existing at the time, and their comparative importance.

CHAPTER VII

Vestments and Ornaments in use 1557-1572—The Recusants—Bishop Downham reproved for laxity in enforcing the law—Church fabrics ruinous—Public penance—King's Preachers—Bishop Chaderton—Vigorous measures adopted.

WHATEVER opinion we may hold of Queen Elizabeth's private views on religious subjects, in her public policy she was not a "Protestant," though a Reformer, but disposed to stand on the old ways, and, as she announced in the proclamation of her title, "Defender of the Faith," "the trewe, ancient, and Catholic faithe."

She deemed it her highest wisdom at first to allow matters ecclesiastical to go on very much as in her sister's reign, with as little change as possible. This was clearly pointed out in the Address to Parliament which Sir Nicholas Bacon gave in her name. "No party language is to kept up in this kingdom; the names heretic, schismatic, papist, and such like are to be laid aside and forgotten: on the one side, there must be a guard against unlawful worship and superstition, and, on the other, things must not be left under such a loose regulation as to occasion indifferency in religion and contempt of holy things." In this the Queen set an example herself, attending mass

in the royal chapel as regularly as her sister had done, but prohibiting the elevation of the Host.

But all else remained at first as in the previous reign, the ancient ceremonies continued,[1] the crucifix remained on the altar, tapers were lighted, and incense burnt as in former days. Her subjects in the country generally approved of this policy. The changes made in the parish churches were few, and such as they were, carried out without much difficulty or opposition. This is borne out by the churchwardens' accounts which have been preserved. In St. Mary's on the Hill, Chester, under the date 1557, there are payments "For frygancens (frankincense) iiij^{d}. For the skowryng of the censers i^{d}. For ij ledes for the ij haly water stocks v^{s}. For fillyng of the fount at Ester and Wesson tyed ij^{d}. For makyng of a stere xx^{d}; pentyng and gyldyng of the same stere xx^{d}. Wyer ii^{d} ob. [2½^{d}]. Rope to the stere ix^{d}. Candylls for the stere and the holyn iij^{s}. Makyng of iij$^{lb.}$ waxe to the hye alter iij^{d}. Makyng of ix$^{lb.}$ of waxe for the Rode lofte ix^{d}. Wier to the rode lofte ij^{d} ob." This was in Mary's reign. In 1558-9, after Elizabeth had succeeded, similar entries occur. "ij^{d} is paid for a corde to ye Roode clothe for Pame [Palm] Sondaye. iiij^{d} for frankynsence. ij^{d} for scouring of ye sence (censer) and to candellar [two chandeliers]. xv^{d} for ye makynge of ye waxe for a ster. For a ponde of candells for to go A vesetynge [to go a visiting]

[1] Bishop Tunstall, writing to Secretary Cecil, August 19, 1559, declares that he "cannot consent to the visitation of his diocese, if it is to extend to pulling down altars, defacing churches, and taking away crucifixes."

iiij^{d} ob. For ye Hallohynge (hallowing) of Corporas and ij hauter clothys x^{d}. For ye makynge of ye waxe for the holle yere for ye heauter [altar] xxi^{d}. 1559 for mendynge of to albys [two albs] iiij^{d}." But in the same year we find "iiij^{s} vj^{d} payd for ye comenyon boke," and "ij^{d} payd to Rychard Colle for ye taking done of ye rode," while "bordes to the comynion table and bordes to make formes and feete to them," cost v^{s} iij^{d}. In 1562 a further sum of "iij^{s} x^{d} is payd for takynge downe the Rodlofte, and ij^{s} for takynge down the Altars." At the same time xiiij^{d} are paid for the "10 Commaundements and vi^{d} for makynge ii rochets for ye boys, and iiij^{d} for makynge a Rotchete for the Clarke." In 1572 "An Exposition of Mathew Nowells Cathechisme and a boke of Articles" are obtained at a charge of vj^{s} ij^{d}. And the following year "iij^{s} ij^{d} *ob.* are recayved of Mr. Knoles for xi^{li} of brasse beinge ye Buckett and ye owld cense [censer]." In 1574 a churchwarden mentions as "remayninge in my coustodie towe whye chandleres and tow sakaringe belles and one whyte bone Boxe with a silver hoocke and halder." In the same year vj^{d} is paid "for a desk to laye the bybell one [on]."

The churchwardens' book for a neighbouring church, St. Michael's, contains a long list of "implements" and vestments belonging to the church in the second year of Elizabeth, and that same list is practically identical with the one for 1564. Thus for the first six years of Elizabeth's reign, the vestments and ornaments, which had been in use in the reign of Mary, and in that of Henry VIII., were still existing, and may or may not have been employed in the

regular course of the services. It was not till 1565 that these were sold by the parish, and after that date no vestment beyond the ordinary surplice is recorded or alluded to.

Articles handed over to the new churchwardens of St. Michael's, Chester, April 23, 1564:—

"A silver and gilt chalice, weighing 18 oz. A cope of scarlet, embroidered. A vestment of green satin of Bruges. Another red vestment of say and all things belonging thereto. Two banners. 3 altar-cloths of linen cloth. A painted cloth, which covered the rood. The best frontal of yellow satin of Bruges with a fringe. Three other frontals. 3 flaxen towels and a golden cushion. A cross of brass. Two sacring bells and two cruets. A painted cloth of the 12 apostles. An old canvas cloth which was next the stone altar. A cear cloth of..red branched work. The Bible with a book of Erasmus. A Communion Book, and a Book of the Homilies in the Passion week. A Judas of wood 'that the candeles was stikt on.' A Judas that the pascal (the large candle made at Easter) stood on. A staff that the pascal was made on. Thirteen small pascal staves. Three coffers and the poor man's box. A frame that was the sepulchre. An altar stone that is in the coffer. A coffer in the rood loft. Four stumps of torches. A cake of wax weighing 13 lbs. A holy water stone. A brasen censer and a pax. A small sanctus bell. Six small brass rods. A holy water bucket of brass. A cross staff of brass, and the banner of the Cross."

Many of these are recorded as having been sold in the following year, 1565.

In this policy of accepting the *status quo ante* Elizabeth would have continued but for the overbearing and insulting attitude of the Pope, which had the effect of driving her to "conciliate the Protestants,

and save from their extravagance as much as she could of Catholic truth."

As early as the first year of her reign it was found necessary to pass an Act dealing with Recusancy, imposing a penalty for non-attendance at church, consisting of the formal censures of the Church, and a fine of one shilling to the poor for every offence. This Act was made much more stringent in the twenty-second year, and in the north the Bishops of Chester were repeatedly reproved for not being active in enforcing the Act of Uniformity, and hunting down popish recusants, the Council and the High Commission being much stricter than the bishops in enforcing obedience to the law. For this neglect Bishop Downham was reported to the Council in 1560, the first year of his episcopate. In 1562 he was associated with the Earl of Derby in a "Commission for Ecclesiastical Causes, to enforce the acts for the uniformity of Common Prayer, and restoring to the Crown the ancient jurisdiction over the estate ecclesiastical and spiritual."

Bishop Downham appears to have been negligent in other respects as well, for report is made to Archbishop Parker that Blackburn and Whalley parishes had been grossly neglected, and against the Bishop himself it was alleged that he taxed his clergy for visitation fees, but avoided the trouble of a visitation. The Bishop urges as his plea for this neglect that he did not like to trouble his clergy by summoning them to a meeting. It is not surprising, therefore, that in 1567 he should have been sharply rebuked by the Queen for not providing for the

churches in his diocese, as well as for his remissness in prosecuting recusants.

In the following year, February 3, 1568, it was necessary to quicken the action of the Commissioners by a letter from the Queen, which was followed on the 21st of the same month by a peremptory letter to the Bishop alone. In November of the same year he reports progress to Cecil, and speaks of the good service done by the preaching of the Dean of St. Paul's. But two years later, November 12, 1570, he is summoned again for remissness.

The following selection of presentments from the visitation in 1561-2 throws some light upon the condition of the churches in the early days of Bishop Downham's episcopate. The church fabric is reported to be "ruinous" at Bury, Witnesley, Deane, Maxfeld (Macclesfield), Warrington, Blackburn (windows also), Clideroe, Lawe, Walton, and Northmeles; church and churchyard at Bolton, Chedill, and Mobberley.[1] At Eccles, Warrington, Altam, and Winwick the chancel is defective. Pendell is stated to be without a curate, and the vicar of Maxfeld neglects divine service; at Eccles he is non-resident, and does not preach according to the Queen's Injunctions. The curate too at Eccles is presented for not expounding to the parishioners the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the articles of faith (the Creed), and for not teaching boys the Catechism. The Rector of Winwick and the Vicar of Deane do not preach, nor does their brother at

[1] The names, very variously spelt in different folios, are given as they occur in the original record.

Eccleston, and the latter also gives no alms to the poor.

The youths in Manchester parish church are not taught, and the Dean and his colleagues are presented for not receiving in due order the Communion on Sundays.

The order of 1549 forbade "all buying and selling, gaming, or unfitting demeanour in church or churchyards, especially during the Common Prayer, the sermon, and reading of the homily."

Despite this regulation, the churchyard is made a market-place very commonly, *e.g.* at Warrington, Eccles, Standishe, Legh, Macclesfield, and even in the church itself at Mobberley fighting has taken place. A large number of presentments for fornication is entered, especially at Stopford (Stockport), Bolton, Manchester, and Bury. The penalty imposed in several cases was "to fast 3 Fridays afore Ester twice off bred and drink, on Good Friday bread and water, and to gyf xii*d.* to the reparacion of the Cathedral Church, and xii*d.* to the poor awms box on Good Friday." Occasionally the fine is devoted to the repair of the highways, as at Brindley an offender was directed to pay to the poor-box in his parish church 5*s.* and 4*s.* to keep up the public roads. An adulterer had to say the seven penitential Psalms on Easter day, and offer to the poor-box 3*s.* 4*d.*, and the same sum to the church fabric.

The offender did not often get off with a mere money payment, but had to smart in person. He or she had to do public penance on two or more Sundays, and in one case the culprit was condemned to stand

in the market-place at Manchester with bare head on Saturday, the day of greatest business. The presentment for neglect of preaching is noteworthy, as Elizabeth at first discouraged preaching, and considered three or four preachers sufficient for a whole county. In the proclamation issued at the beginning of her reign, she "thought it necessary to charge and command all manner of her subjects, as well those that be called to ministry in the Church as all others, that they do forbear to preach or teach, or to give audience to any manner of doctrine or preaching, other than to the Gospels and Epistles of the day and the Ten Commandments in the vulgar tongue, without exposition or addition of any manner of sense or meaning to be applied or added." We shall see later how often the importance of preaching had to be impressed upon the Queen and her Council, and it will be convenient here to refer to the special arrangement which had already been made for such preaching in the diocese of Chester.

A special body of "King's Preachers" had been appointed in the early part of Edward VI.'s reign. When the lands of the Collegiate Church at Manchester were transferred to Edward Earl of Derby, it was stipulated that part of the rents should be applied to the support of four itinerant ministers, who were to be sent at stated intervals to preach the reformed doctrines in the remoter parts of Lancashire. The original annual grant was £40 to each preacher, the selection being left to the Earl of Derby.

In Elizabeth's reign the amount voted for this purpose was £200, which was to be bestowed upon

the support of these itinerant preachers, or given to the clergy placed in charge of poor chapelries. Amongst the names who held the office of King's or Queen's Preacher were Dr. Pendleton, Bradford the Martyr, Pilkington, Bishop of Durham, Saunders, the Bishop's "most loving and gentle master," Richard Midgeley, Isaac Ambrose of Preston, Nathanael Heywood of Ormskirk, who received the appointment "through the singular goodness of his lady, the Countess of Derby," William Bell. These men, aided by the puritanism of the clergy of the chief towns and their successors, left Lancashire "downright Protestant."

The following document which was issued in 1621 by King James may conveniently be recited here—

"Right Rev^{d} Father in God and Trusty and Well-Beloved We greet you well. Whereas out of our zeal to God's glory and a care of Many Thousands of our subjects within ye county of Lancaster (there being a great want of Maintenance for Preachers in most places of y^{t} shire) We have appointed 200^{li} of our free gift and during our pleasure to be paid yearly to 4 preachers who are to preach in ye several parts of ye county among ye Impropriations there, by ye Appointment of ye Bishop of y^{t} Diocese: We now understand y^{t} ye said preachers after they are admitted to those places do accept of other Benefices remote from thense: and namely James Martin, one of ye said preachers, hath now lately accepted of ye Cure of ye Town and Parish of Preston: yet intendeth to hold our said pension contrary to our gracious meaning in bestowing ye same. We have therefor thought

fitt to let you know that our pleasure is y^t^ henceforth those pensions be paid to none but such as do wholly and only attend those Impropriations for which we conferred ye same. And y^t^ if any of these 4 preachers now have or hereafter shall have any benefice with cure of souls (unless it be some vicarage lying amongst those Impropriations where he is appointed to preach) that you presently nominate and assign some other sufficient and conformable Minister to his pension. And our pleasure is yt you our Receiver of our said County or any other our officers whom it may concern do make paiment and allowance thereof to such preachers only as our said Bishop shall appoint. Given at Westminster ye 2nd of June, 1621."

At Chester, which was strongly Protestant, and as such in complete harmony with the Chamberlain of Chester, the Earl of Leicester, who posed as the champion of Protestantism, the Act against recusancy was strictly enforced, and in the Mayor's books many presentments are entered. Thus in 1569, Richard Scrivener is bound in the heavy sum of £40 to "be of honest and decent behaviour and order as well against all Prechers, Professors of the Gospell, Curats and Mynistres within the said citie, and also against all officers and ministers of our said soveraigne, and upon every Sunday and Holy daie from hensforth be present at every sermon within the Parish Church, and there during the same in desent order to remain unlesse urgent busines be the cause of the contrary."

A number of persons in 1575 were presented

and fined 6*s.* 8*d.* for not coming to their parish church.

In 1577 most of the crosses in and about Chester, at the Bars, the North Gate, and near Spital, Boughton, were pulled down except the High Cross. This was done in obedience to the Archbishop's Visitors, by a zealous sheriff, Mr. Mutton, whose death a few years later was attributed by some to his iconoclastic zeal.

After Bishop Downham's death, at the close of 1577, the see of Chester remained vacant for another period of two years. In a letter of the Bishop of London to Sir Christopher Hatton, recommending Doctor Chaderton for the bishopric, the diocese is compared to "an unruly family without a steward, which will, by this long delay that happened, be hardly drawn to good order." This comparison was fully justified, for the Seminarist priests from the Continent were meanwhile taking abundant advantage of the absence of "a steward," and worked so zealously in promoting the interests of Rome, that the new bishop found the duty of repression, negligently and unsympathetically carried out by Bishop Downham, more than ever difficult to perform.

Dr. William Chaderton, who was appointed in 1579, was a native of Manchester, and educated at Manchester Grammar School, whence he proceeded to Cambridge University, being successively Fellow of Christ's College, in 1558, Margaret Professor of Divinity, 1567, President of Queen's College, 1568, and Regius Professor of Divinity in 1569. He came under the notice of Queen Elizabeth on the occasion

of her visit to Cambridge, in 1564, when, as one of the ripest and most learned of the Fellows, he was selected to take part in a formal disputation. Queen Elizabeth's objections to a married clergy were as strong as those of her sister Mary,[1] and it is amusing to recall that Dr. Chaderton, who had expressed himself so adversely to the married state, should, in 1560, write to Lord Leicester asking his "good lykinge and consent" of his intended marriage. It was Dr. Chaderton who had declared in a wedding sermon that the choice of a wife was "full of hazard, not unlike as if one in a barrel, full of serpents, should grope for one fish. If he escape harm of the snakes, and light on a fish, he may be thought fortunate. Yet let him not boast, for perhaps it may prove but an eel." Leicester's reply to his chaplain's letter is cautiously worded, giving consent generally, but leaving the matter to his own decision "as your owneself is moved therin, and wishing his speyd to be such as may alwaies turn to his greate comfort and consolation." It does not appear whether, in his choice of the lady he married (Katherine, daughter of John Revell of London), he was fortunate enough to find a goodly "fish to his comfort and consolation." But his marriage proved to be no obstacle to his advancement.

After obtaining a prebend at York in 1574, and

[1] 1561, Aug. 9. The Queen's injunction was issued that "the wives and children of all governors, prebendaries, or students of Cathedral Churches or Colleges residing within houses belonging to the same shall not be permitted to remain or abide therein."

another at Westminster in 1576, he was nominated Bishop of Chester in 1579. On account of the poverty of the bishopric, he was allowed to hold *in commendam* the Rectory of Bangor Monachorum in Flintshire (which he exchanged for that of Thornton le Moors) and the Wardenship of the College at Manchester. Sir John Harrington, referring to the leading position which he took in university affairs, describes him as a learned and grave doctor, able to lay aside his gravity in the pulpit, well-beloved by his scholars for not affecting any sour or austere fashion, either in teaching or governing. On the other hand, Dering, the friend of Thomas Cartwright, the Puritan, charges him with having little constancy, either in his life or in his religion.

His new position called for the exercise of all his ability and strength of character. His new diocese contained far the largest portion of recusants of all the dioceses in England: out of 8,512 persons certified to be such in England, no less than 2,442 resided in the diocese of Chester. Again Cheshire appears to have acquiesced much more readily than did Lancashire in the religious changes of the period. Thus in the Visitation Records of 1592, whereas in the Lancashire part of the volume whole pages are frequently occupied with lists of Popish recusants, and there is hardly a parish that does not return at least a dozen, in Cheshire it is no uncommon thing to find a dozen parishes without a single recusant. The bulk of the Cheshire cases were on the Welsh border in Holt, Farndon, and Worthenbury parishes. In one Recusant roll, Cheshire has in all one hundred and fifty names,

which compares very favourably with Lancashire, where the number was seven hundred.

Bishop Chaderton had already had experience of the obstinacy of Puritan Nonconformists as the head of a Cambridge college, and henceforward for sixteen long and busy years he was to enforce the ecclesiastical laws against the other extreme party, not being allowed to relax his vigilance for a single moment without a reminder from the Privy Council or the Archbishop of York. He was associated on the Ecclesiastical Commission, June 10, 1580, with the Archbishop of York and Henry Earl of Derby, and directed to proceed first and more strictly against the gentry in Lancashire than others, because they led the rest to defect. Three weeks later a further mandate was issued by the Council, that as the recusants did not regard the small penalties formerly laid on them, the Commissioners were to impose heavier fines, and the chief offenders were to be confined in the Castle of Halton, on account of the remissness in the ordinary prisons, where the keepers were reported to allow them too much liberty.

It would appear that Bishop Chaderton's active and vigorous measures had produced a certain effect, for William Lord Burghley writes on July 23, 1580, commending him and Lord Derby in that Lancashire, which had been reported to be in very great disorder, had by their "godlie proceedings been very well reformed, and great hope of better obedience by such your painful perseverance." In the same letter Lord Burghley goes on to say (as though he feared that the Bishop was inclined to severity), "Remember St.

Paul, *tempestive, intempestive.* Somewhere you must be a Father, somewhere as a Lord. For so the diversitie of your flocke will require. With the meanest sort, courtesie will serve more than argument, with the higher sort auctoritie is a match." The same wise counsel, showing a spirit of toleration remarkable for the time and under the circumstances of the day, was given in the matter of "Wafer Bread." "Yt were good to teach them that are weake in Conscience in esteeming of the Wafer Bread, not to make a difference. But yf there weaknes continue, yt were not unwise, in our opinion, charitably to tollerate them as Children, with milk."

Bishop Chaderton's disposition was in accord with this. For though strict and earnest in the performance of his duties, he was a cautious and temperate prelate, not hostile to the more moderate of either Romanists or Puritans, nor inclined to bring undue pressure upon them.[1] But it would seem as though the Romanist party provoked severity.

Cardinal Allen, a native of Rossall, in North Lancashire, was most active in directing the campaign of the Romish emissaries.

In reviewing the lamentable manifestations of religious feeling at this period, it must not be forgotten that Protestantism and loyalty had been made almost synonymous by the promulgation of Pope Pius' Bull of Deposition, branding Queen Elizabeth as "a bastard and excommunicated heretic," and absolving her sub-

[1] Archbishop Sandys complains in a friendly letter—"You are noted to yelde to much to general Fastings, all the Daie preachinge and Prayinge."

jects from all allegiance to her. The establishment of a seminary of priests at Douay, the Jesuit mission under Parsons and Campian, who were frequently entertained at the houses of the leading county families, the discovery of one plot after another against the Queen's life, continued to inflame the public mind, already exasperated against the Papacy by the cruel butcheries in Flanders and the massacre on St. Bartholomew's day. We cannot, therefore, be surprised that the Queen and her advisers should determine to "proceed roundly with recusants as refused conformitie." Elizabeth at this juncture abandoned her objection to preachers, and allowed Walsingham to write to the Bishop, "I perswade myself yf those parts were well furnished with a competent number of good learned preachers, the recusants would be inwardlie in haste as conformable as they be outwardlie in bodie. Do what lieth in you to call into your Diocese such ministers as maie be a helpe to you in the ministry of the Worde."

Bishop Chaderton had taken up his abode at the College of Manchester, as the most convenient centre for action; but after two years' vigorous administration (during which he was obliged to call for the Queen's licence of absence from Parliament) the Council write, April 1, 1582, to the justices of Cheshire and Lancashire complaining, "notwithstanding the meaures taken, there was little result, divers remayne still obstinate;" and in June 1582 they call for greater strictness—"the obstinacy of great ones almost everywhere keep back the lower sort from conforming; they should be indicted at the quarter

sessions, and those refusing to appear outlawed." It is abundantly clear from the State Papers that the greater part of the wealthy families in Lancashire were distinctly in favour of the Roman obedience; and although steps were taken to ensure the presence of all justices at the sessions, there was great remissness and want of earnestness in putting the law into operation. But though many ancient Lancashire families were reduced to poverty by the heavy sums levied on them,[1] and though children were taken from their parents to be brought up in the reformed faith, neither fine nor imprisonment nor even outlawry was able to overcome their obduracy; and in 1590 the Bishop was fain to confess that the number of recusants is great and daily increases, and there may be seen usually every Sunday and holiday as many people to repair to places suspected as to the parish church.

[1] Mrs. Margaret Ravenscroft in 1592 was fined £240, and Mrs. Anne Mallam of West Kirby the same sum, while Mrs. Alice Whittmore of Leighton was mulcted in a fine amounting to £960.

CHAPTER VIII

Puritanism in Lancashire—Mar-Prelate Press—Non-use of the surplice — Omission of preaching and perambulations—Bishops Hugh Bellot, Richard Vaughan, George Lloyd—Growing importance of the pulpit.

The name "Puritan" was given to the English disciples of the foreign reformers, probably in derision of the superior purity of doctrine and discipline which the more rigid among them claimed as their characteristic. They wished to bring the English Church more into conformity with the Genevan type. They maintained that they accepted the Word of God alone as their rule of life, and regarded all but the simplest and barest ritual to be of human invention and superstitious. All symbolism in religion was condemned. They would have no sign of the Cross in baptism, or ring used in the marriage service. The surplice was a rag of Popery. The observance of saints' days and chanting with organs were popish abominations. The two ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper they accepted in name, but denuded of that grace attached to them severally by the Catholic Church. The clergy were ministers of the Word, and preaching the great ordinance of the Church. Some of these Puritans

formally separated from the Church of England in 1566; others remained in her Communion, evading the laws, and supported by Leicester and Walsingham, as well as by a strong party in the House of Commons. The public printing-presses were all closed against them, and a certain party amongst them set up a private press. To prevent discovery, it was moved from place to place. First set up at Moulsey in Surrey, then at Kingston-on-Thames, then successively at Fawsley Court in Northamptonshire and at Coventry, it was finally run down at Manchester, and the whole plant captured. The publications, which mark a distinct era in the history of Puritanism, were a series of bitterly satirical tracts, signed by Martin Mar-prelate, containing virulent attacks upon the bishops and the "Bounsing Priests," which occasioned the passing in 1593 of a severe statute against Nonconformity.

Lancashire, while in some parts it continued to have throughout Elizabeth's reign a large number of Roman Catholics, and furnished a greater proportion of recusants than any other district in England, had also in the south-eastern divisions an equally large number of Puritans of the most pronounced and uncompromising type.

"The busy traders and manufacturers of Salfordshire, having formed mercantile connections in Holland and Germany, became acquainted with the great changes in the religion of those countries. Better educated than their rustic neighbours, and having more money to spare and more opportunity to spend it, they purchased books, conversed with foreigners,

occasionally travelled to continental fairs, knew more than their priests, prided themselves on a sturdy independence of thought, and became many of them firm and zealous adherents of the Reformation." Bolton soon acquired the name of the Geneva of Lancashire, Manchester and Rochdale not being far behind in like zeal.

In the hundreds of West Derby and Leyland, the leading families were chiefly Roman Catholic, with a respectable minority of Puritans, made up by a few smaller landed proprietors, the yeomen and traders in villages, and a considerable party in the towns. In the hundreds of Salford and Blackburn the Puritans had the majority. Amongst the leading families active in their prosecution of recusants were the Booths of Barton and Dunham-Massey, the Hollands of Denton, the Birches, the Worsleys; while the town of Blackburn, next to Bolton and Manchester, was the most Puritan town in Lancashire, though in the neighbourhood the Roman Catholics were numerous and powerful. The hundreds of Amounderness and Lonsdale contained a much larger proportion of Roman Catholics, the Puritan party being distinctly weak.

This condition of affairs will explain the difficulties which Bishop Chaderton encountered in administering his immense diocese. He has been called "the Puritan bishop of Chester," "showing," according to Antony à Wood, "more respect to a Cloak than a Cassock." But notwithstanding this, and his partiality (according to Archbishop Sandys) for "prophesyings and all the daie preachings," he had great trouble with

the Puritans, who were as obstinate in their nonconformity as the other party. Whitney, the Cheshire poet, dedicated one of his emblems to him, entitling it *Vigilantia et Custodia*, having the device of a church with a cock on the tower and a lion at the door—the cock to rouse the sleeping, and the lion to defend the flock from foes.

This confession of failure on the part of the Bishop is confirmed by the adverse report which the Council of the North sent up to the Privy Council in 1591, on the condition of Lancashire and Cheshire.[1]

"Small reformation has been made there by the Ecclesiastical Commission, as may appear by the emptiness of churches on Sundays and holidays, and the multitude of bastards and drunkards; great sums have been levied under pretence of the Commission, but the counties are in worse case than before, and the number of those who do not resort to divine service greater. The people lack instruction, for the preachers are few, most of the parsons unlearned, many of those learned not resident, and divers unlearned daily admitted into very good benefices by the Bishop.

"The youth are for the most part trained up by such as profess papistry; no examination is had of schools and school-masters. The proclamation for the apprehension of seminaries, Jesuits, and mass priests, and for calling home children from parts beyond the sea, is not executed, nor are their Lordships' letters commanding the Justices to call before them, quarterly, all parsons, vicars, curates, churchwardens, and sworn

[1] *Domestic State Papers*, 1591-94.

men, and examine them on oath how the statutes of 1 & 23 Eliz. as to resorting to churches are obeyed, that at the next quarter sessions information may be given against the offenders. Some of the coroners and justices and their families do not frequent church, and many of them have not communicated at the Lord's Supper since the beginning of Her Majesty's reign. The seminaries in many places have lately offered disputations against the settled religion; but nothing hath been said to them; the people who resort to church are so few that preachers who were determined to preach on Sundays and holidays have refrained for lack of auditors; the people so swarm in the streets and alehouses during service time, that many churches have only present the curate and his clerk, and open markets are kept in service time. Since the statutes of A° 18 bastards have been more plentiful, but no punishment has been administered. The statute for punishment of rogues and provision for the poor is not put in force, so that there are many lusty vagabonds. Marriages and christenings are celebrated by seminary and other priests in corners, and no examination made thereof, and in some parts children that have been baptized according to law have been afterwards re-baptized by priests. Divers mass priests, having been apprehended, refuse to be examined upon oath as to where they have frequented, and by whom they have been cherished, so that the state of the country is not thoroughly known, and until their haunts have been discovered, it is impossible to reform it. Very few or none of the stewards of the leets, etc. have informed the people within their

precincts of the statute of A° 5, against foreign jurisdiction, although charged to do it; and the youth are not sworn to Her Majesty in the Leet Courts according to law.

"Alehouses are innumerable, and the law for suppressing and keeping them in order is unexecuted, whereby toleration of drunkenness, unlawful games, and other great abuses follow. Although their Lordships have often written to the justices for redress, small or no reformation has followed, and cock-fights and other unlawful games are tolerated on Sundays and holidays, during divine service, at which justices of the peace and some Ecclesiastical Commissioners are often present. The recusants have spies about the Commissioners, to give intelligence when anything is intended against them, and some of the bailiffs attending upon the Commissioners are entertained for that purpose, so that the recusants may shift out of the way, and avoid being apprehended; some examples ought to be made of the bailiffs as a terror to others; as also of some of the Commissioners and justices, who have grants of the goods and lands of the recusants, so that the recusants may not forfeit them, in case they are touched for any illegal cause. It will be hard for the Lord President of the North to keep in order Yorkshire and the other counties adjoining, so long as Lancashire remains unreformed. The issues, forfeitures, and outlawed goods being let to farm in Lancashire, the farmers make very easy compositions with such as forfeit any issues, and with those outlawed for recusancy and other causes; the justices and sheriffs tax and return very small issues upon the

offenders, and the goods of persons outlawed are seldom or never seized nor they apprehended; so that the law works no redress in that county."

Then follows a list of fourteen justices of peace in Lancashire, of whom three are Ecclesiastical Commissioners who are suspected of favouring papacy, with the names of their dwelling-places, state of their families and tenants, etc., etc.

The three richest rectories in Lancashire, Winwick, Wigan, and Middleton were held by Puritans, as were the three great vicarages, Rochdale, Whalley, and Blackburn. In these parishes were many chapelries, also occupied by Puritan ministers. The promoters of the Manchester exercises were all zealous Puritans. In the Visitation Reports of 1588—1592 there are frequent presentments of the non-use of the surplice; the Book of Common Prayer, and the Communion Book, and even occasionally the chalice, are reported to be wanting or in bad repair.

The surplice was not used in 1589-90 by very many of the clergy of the diocese. This was made the subject of strong complaint against the Collegiate Church of Manchester by Archbishop Piers, May 31, 1590. "None of the Fellows, ministers, or choristers do wear surplices in time of prayers and ministration of Sacraments, which is undecent and offensive in such a Collegiate Church," and in urging Bishop Chaderton to reform the abuses there and elsewhere, he bids him "first begin in your own College at Manchester." The same neglect is found at the Bishop's own visitation to exist at Prestwich, Rochdale, Middleton, Ashton-under-Lyme and Ashton-super-Mersey, Norton,

Grappenhall, Malpas (by both rectors), Waverton, Swettenham, Macclesfield, Acton, Astbury, Winwick, and both in 1589 and 1592 at Legh, Weverham, and Stockport. At Mobberley and Alderley the clergy "weare the surplice but now and then."

Complaint is made repeatedly of the omission of preaching and of perambulations. At Coddington and Baddiley there was no pulpit. At Dodleston the rector is no preacher, but the wardens affirm as a sufficient excuse that they have twelve sermons yearly. In other parishes (Shocklach, Guilden Sutton) they ask for quarterly sermons, while at Ince "they had had noe quarter sermons these eight years."

Catechising is commonly omitted, and parents are admonished for not bringing their children to be catechised. The church fabric in several parishes is reported to be in bad order, and sometimes not kept clean, but the presentments of this nature are by no means as numerous as in previous years. At Coddington, where "the roodlofte standeth undefaced and full of idolaterie pictures," the wardens are admonished (September 26, 1592) to deface the pictures and roodloft before the Feast of the Annunciation. Jewel's *Apology* and the two books of the *Homilies* are ordered to be provided. The Bible of largest volume is wanted at (amongst other places) Childwall, Middleton, Davenham, Waverton, Middlewich, Neston.

The Rector of Waverton is presented for admitting "divers to the sacraments that will nott saie the Catechisme and other questions, and such that weare evill livers uppon there promis of amendmente," and at Bangor in Flintshire "the Curate doth minister the Com-

munion to divers aged xx yeares or above that are thought could not saie the Lordes praier bie herte, the articles of faith, or the tenn commandments." Working on Sundays and holidays is punished. At Davenham Richard Doanne is presented "for causing his people work upon the Saboath and hollidaies baking of bred, stackinge of haie." Humphrey Gibbon of Northenden is presented "for plowing upon 2 holidaies in Easter weeke Twesdaie and uppon Maie daie." John Gibbon junior is presented for "affirming that the saide Humphrey might work uppon the Hollidaies and that the Preachers taught soe, and tawnted the Churchwardens and sworne men for findinge falte thereat." Another man in the same parish, charged with harrowing and sowing on Easter Tuesday, admitted that he did it, but that "he was at divine service and did hit afterwards for want of other tyme and the latenes of the yere." At Nantwich "Richard Chester carieth an ape abroade on the Saboath daies and is absent from Church. Warned that he shall hereafter more dutiefully frequent the Church and not use play with his Ape upon the Lord's day."

The Puritans were rapidly gaining strength, and making their influence felt with the Government of the day. A formal complaint was made in 1590 (one of a series sent to the Privy Council) by preachers and ministers of the "enormities in the County of Lancaster and some parts of Cheshire." After referring to the continual recourse of Jesuits and seminary priests, and the number of persons suspected of attending masses daily, they complain of "private marriages and baptisms by massing priests, of wakes, ales, maigames,

Rushbearings, Bearbaitings, Doveales, Bonfiers, piping and daunsinges freely exercised on the Sabboth. Those reformed of recusancy come so seldom to church, behave unconformably, withdrawing to the furthest part of the church from the Word, bestowing themselves in their private prayers, talking or misspending the time. The service is disturbed by continual intercourse of people in and out; some come when service is half done, many depart before the end. Private prayers are used, crossing, knocking of breast, handling of beads, whilst outside a great tumult of people remain in the churchyard. Disorders at the Easterly Communion are frequent. Many intrude to receive who have not been at divine service or at any part of prayers before Communion. Many refuse to take the Sacrament with their hands, but proffer to receive it with their mouths at the hand of the minister. There is great irreverence to get speedy dispatch; many depart before the end; of 1000 or 2000 not one score will remain to give thanks with the minister."

"The chapels of ease (three times as many as the parish churches and more), through backwardness of evil-affected people in conferring due maintenance on the minister, are many of them utterly destitute of any curates, and grow into utter ruine and desolation. Many under pretence of their chapels refrain from their parish church, and so come not at all. Therefore many grow into utter atheism and barbarism."

In 1595 Chaderton was translated to the see of Lincoln, and was succeeded by Hugh Bellot, Bishop

of Bangor. A Cheshire man, third son of Thomas Bellot of Great Moreton, he held in 1584 the rectory of Caerwys in Flintshire, and the vicarage of Gresford in Denbighshire, and in the following year he was nominated to the see of Bangor, through the influence of Lord Burleigh, whose steward and trusted friend was Thomas Bellot, brother of the future bishop. It is interesting to note that while he held this see, he assisted Dr. William Morgan in bringing out the Welsh translation of the Bible. Richard Vaughan, then rector of Lutterworth, afterwards Bishop of Chester, co-operated also in this work. Bishop Bellot did not live long after his translation to Chester, dying, at the age of fifty-four, on June 13, 1596, hardly eight months after receiving the temporalities, and was buried in the chancel of Wrexham Church. He is said to have been very strict in dealing with the Romish recusants, but no record is to be found of any special instances of this severity. He is reported also to have prohibited the presence of a woman in his household.

For the third time within fifty-six years the see of Chester was filled by the appointment of a Bishop of Bangor, Richard Vaughan succeeding Bishop Bellot in the English diocese, as he followed him in the occupancy of the Welsh see. The Queen, however, allowed the interval of a year to pass after Bellot's death before she made the appointment, April 23, 1597. Richard Vaughan was a native of Carnarvonshire. Owing to his relationship to Bishop Aylmer of London, he was fortunate in obtaining speedy preferment. Sir John Harrington describes him as "very

prompt and ready in speache and withall facetious." An enemy to all supposed miracles, he spoke of the Queen's touching for the evil in such a way as, if it had been told the Queen, "she would never have made him Bishop of Chester."

Besides the part which he took in furthering the publication of Dr. Morgan's Welsh translation of the Bible, he was associated with some Cambridge divines in the drawing up of the "Lambeth Articles," which were so remarkable for their pronounced Calvinism. During his episcopate of seven years he was called upon to check the extravagances and insubordination of his clergy, who had in very many instances, especially the rectors of the great Lancashire parishes, favoured strongly the Genevan school of thought. He appears to have been earnest enough in following up the popish recusants, though, like Bishop Chaderton, he has to acknowledge failure. In a report, January 14, 1598, he states that he has used his best endeavours with the sheriff to apprehend recusants (for non-payment of their share for the Irish expedition) but without effect. They had so many spies and kindred and alliances that it was almost impossible to seize them. Those who are confined in Lancaster gaol are very ill kept, they have liberty to go where and whither they list, hunt, hawk, and go to horse-races. He urgently presses for the appointment of preachers. The Queen impresses upon Lord Burghley, on his appointment to be President in the North, the importance of stringent measures. "It appears that within the last five or six years whole parishes have grown recusant, not six

households within six miles being found obedient. Through toleration and negligence, wilful papists are unpunished. Dangerous recusants have been liberated by the High Commissioners without the privity of most of the Council. Meaner persons are called by a hundred a day to the High Commission, whilst the greater are not called, or compound privately." How very hot was the pursuit we may learn from a letter of July 3, 1599, from John Ferne to Secretary Cecil, describing a hunt for recusants at German Abbey, a favourite place of resort for the Romish party. Floors, ceilings, pavements, and double walls were broken up and vaults of strange conveyance found out. "At the stair-head was a post as thick as a man's body, on which the house seemed to bear, but it was really a removable hinge, locked from beneath, covering a hole at which a man might descend."

Bishop Vaughan succeeded in obtaining from King James in 1603 a grant of £200 per annum for the stipends of four preachers to "instruct the people in true religion." The appointments made by him were of persons with Calvinist leanings, and their preaching did much to strengthen the hands of the Puritan party. He found it therefore necessary to check some of their extravagances, which were as dangerous to the well-being of the Church as the political intrigues of the opposite party.[1] In the Visitation Records, together with notices of persons not communicating or absenting themselves from church,

[1] He silenced twenty-one of his clergy in Lancashire and twelve in Cheshire.

occur presentments relating to church ornaments and neglect of preaching. At Woodchurch, "neither ten Commandments nor anie other sentences of Scripture are placed in the Church." At Bebington no covering for Communion table, and Ten Commandments not placed. "Joan Goodiker, widow, useth bye reporte to praie on beads. Affirmeth she have bourned her beades." "The Vicar of Eastham hath not yett his ecclesiasticall apparell; the Curate of Stoke goeth not perambulations nor weareth ornaments as is appointed by the Church. At Bidston the Curate hath no cloake with sleeves, and there as well as at Burton there are no monethlie sermons; at Bidston they have had but one sermon these three yeares; and at Westkirbie the Rector did never read devyne service in his parish Church, the Parson never preached, neyther have they four sermons quarterlie."

After the Hampton Court Conference, and the promulgation of the Canons of 1604, severer measures were taken. Bishop Vaughan, on October 3, 1604, summoned a number of the disobedient clergy before him at Aldford, a few miles from Chester, whither he had removed from Chester in consequence of the prevalence of the plague. Amongst the leaders of Nonconformity were Richard Midgley (then deprived of the Vicarage of Rochdale, though still licensed to preach),[1]

[1] Of him Archbishop Whitgift stated (when Dr. Chaderton begged King James at the Hampton Court Conference that Midgley might be allowed to minister without the surplice) that entreaty could not be made for a worse man, since "by his irreverent use of the eucharist, in dealing the bread out of a basket, every one putting in his hand and taking out a piece,

and his son John Midgley, Vicar of Bolton, Thomas Hunt, minister of Oldham,[1] Richard Rothwell, and Edward Walsh, Vicar of Blackburn. These were all publicly admonished by the Bishop, and required to conform to the Liturgy and ceremonies of the Church, and also to subscribe, *ex animo*, the three articles in the 36th Canon. They were all cited to appear again at the same place on November 28, but one only complied with the order. They appear to have been "Revolters after Subscription."

In the interval between the first and second citation Bishop Vaughan was nominated to the see of London, and during his three years' government of that important diocese, by his tact and conciliatory disposition, though he was obliged to suspend or deprive the nonconforming Puritans, he contrived to retain their respect and even affection.[2]

"Without accepting the unmeasured praises of some of his eulogists, there seems no reason to doubt that Bishop Vaughan was a man of great worth. In

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he made many loathe the communion and refuse to come to church."

[1] He is reported in 1608 for that "he weareth not the surplice in time of public prayers and in ministering the Sacraments, useth not the sign of the Cross in Baptism, neither doth he meet the dead corpses of such as come to be buryed at the Church Steele." In Nicholas Assheton's journal (*Chetham Society*), p. 6, it is recorded, 1617, May 17, "some little unkyndness 'twixt Mr. Watmough (Rector of Bury) and Mr. Greenhalgh, because Mr. Watmoughe nor his curate went meete ye dead corps of Mr. Greenhalgh's child at ye church steele (style), or some such matter." In this violation of the rubric on the part of the rector and his curate we can trace incipient puritanism.

[2] Rev. F. Sanders, in *Historic Notes of Bishops of Chester*.

an age when clergy and laity took pleasure in despoiling and plundering the churches, it is pleasant to read that both in Bangor and at Chester he repaired the cathedrals. He ever used gentleness in preference to severity, and seems to have won the devoted friendship of those brought into contact with him. Fuller describes him as 'a very corpulent man, but spiritually minded; an excellent preacher and pious liver. Nothing could tempt him to betray the rights of the Church to sacrilegious hands, not sparing sharply to reprove some of his own order on that account.'"

The diocese of Chester was once more to be presided over by a Welshman, George Lloyd, sixth son of Meredydd ap John of Llanelian yn Rhos in Denbighshire. In the Register of the University of Cambridge the surname is given as Floyd or Fludd, the Welsh Ll, as often, being represented by Fl. He had already a connection with Chester, for his brother David was mayor in 1593, and another brother, Edward, carried on a mercer's business there. He himself was appointed to the post of Divinity Lecturer in the Cathedral, which he held for several years, and the well-known house with carved front in Watergate Street is called Bishop Lloyd's house. He was appointed Bishop of Man in 1600, and on Vaughan's translation to London in 1604 he was nominated to the see of Chester. In his first year of office the whole country was disturbed by the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot, which led to a renewal and a more stringent enforcement of the pains and penalties against popish recusants. Of these Lancashire

and Cheshire contained still a very considerable proportion, but, as in the former reign, no effect was produced by the heavy fines and stern persecution which were employed against them. The Puritans, on the other hand, were treated with great mildness by Bishop Lloyd, and their leading preachers were allowed to continue undisturbed. Nicholas Byfield, a powerful preacher and writer on behalf of the doctrinal Puritans, was permitted to remain for several years as Rector of St. Peter's, Chester, having as one of his congregation the strict Puritan, John Bruen of Stapleford.

The Churchwardens' Accounts of the various churches preserve notices of the growing importance of the pulpit. At St. Mary's and St. Michael's, Chester, in 1606, Randle Holme is engaged to "gild the booles of the Pulpite," and in 1600 the churchwardens of St. Mary's bought at London for 13*s.* 4*d.* a fine "pulpet cushine of purple Branchte velvet with silke fringe, and a lyning of blewe sayd." At Wilmslow in 1609, 30*s.* were paid for "the Canopie to the Pulpete," etc.

At St. Oswald's, 1606, benches were set up before the Communion table, and in 1609 12*d.* was paid for "xxiiij^{or} foote of halfe sparrs which made the feete for the formes before the Communion table." An entry may be added here from the same accounts under 1616, "making the new seats for the Communicants in the Chansell iij^{li} ij^{s}," and 1619, "mending the seat about the Communion Table xi^{d}."

It should, however, be stated that in 1616 occurs the payment of "iiij^{d} For rushes for Communicants to

kneele upon," and in 1619, "For matts for Communicants to kneele upon 11^{s} x^{d}."

Bishop Lloyd was called upon (as was Bishop Chaderton) to impose a military levy upon the clergy of his diocese in the insurrection of 1608, when the poorer incumbents were required to provide a caliver or musket furnished, and the richer clergy, such as the Rectors of Wigan and Winwick and Middleton, were obliged to find a light horseman fully equipped.

CHAPTER IX

Social life of the diocese in Tudor and Stuart periods—Chester Mysteries—Midsummer Show—Football prohibited—Wakes, Church-ales, Welsh-weddings — Rush-bearing — Cocking — Bear-baiting — Severity of punishments— Collections for the poor—Child Marriages.

No account of the religious condition of the diocese of Chester would be complete without some description of the "Mystery Plays," which had a very important influence upon the social and religious life of the people, as well as upon the development of literature. They belong to that group of plays which, however they differ in detail and in dialogue, are only varied arrangements of a single series of scriptural scenes, and which was, as it were, the common property of the Western Church. The several plays of the cycle have one central idea, Christ, the Saviour of the World—Christ promised ; Christ come ; Christ crucified ; Christ risen ; Christ to come again. Thus the Chester plays were arranged in twenty-five pageants which, after setting forth the Fall of Lucifer, the Creation and Fall, the Flood, Abraham's Sacrifice, the Episode of Balaam and Balak, are concerned chiefly with incidents in the New Testament, and the

apocryphal legends connected with our Lord's life which were current in the Middle Ages.

The tradition of their composition accepted in the reign of Elizabeth, and given by Archdeacon Rogers, who died in 1595, is that "these playes of Chester were the work of one Rondoli, a monke of the Abbaye of S. Warburg in Chester, who redused the whole storye of the Bible into English stories in meter, and this monke in a good desire to do good published the same. Then the first Mayor of Chester, Sir John Arneway, K^t^, he caused the same to be played."

An earlier statement put forth by William Newhall, Clerk of the Pentice (Town Clerk) in 1531, represents the English version to be one made by the said William Newhall from the Latin. They were "devised and made by one Sir Henry Fraunces, sometime monk of this dissolved monastery, who obtayned and gate of Clement, then being bisshop of Rome, a thousand daies of pardon to every person resortyng in pecible maner with good devocon to here and see the sayd plaies from tyme to tyme."[1]

He adds "that they were devised to the honour of God by Iohn Arneway, then Maire of this City of Chester, and his brethren and holl cominalty therof, to be brought forthe, declared and plead at the costs and charges of the craftsmen and occupacons of the said citie, whiche hitherunto have from tyme to tyme used and performed the same accordingly." The name of Henry Fraunces, who is said to have obtained from Pope Clement VI. the licence for exhibiting the Chester mysteries, occurs, as senior monk after the

[1] See *Chester in Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns*, p. 317.

sub-prior, William de Mershton, in an agreement of May 5, 1377, between Thomas de Newport, Abbot of St. Werburgh, and John Shalcross, Rector of Taxal (1365—1383). The same name, Henry Fraunces, occurs in an agreement between Simon, Abbot of St. Werburgh, and John de Birchel, Rector of Gawsworth, 1262. This evidence, taken with the unhesitating statement respecting the share in it of John Arneway[1] (Mayor 1268—1277), goes far towards establishing the story which attributes high antiquity to these performances.

The earliest allusion, with date, to the plays is in the Bakers' Charter, 1462, where it is recited that "there hath bene tyme out of mind a company of bakers—and to be redy to pay for the costs and expences of the play and light of Corpus Christi as oft tymes as it shall be assessed by the same stewards for the tyme being." In the Painters and Glaziers' Charter reference is made to the fact that they have been " of one brotherhood for the costs and expenses of the plaie of the Shepperds Wach with the Angells hymne."

In 1471 a charter of incorporation is granted to the Saddlers' Company, one condition being that they keep up their play.

The Chester cycle of twenty-five plays is arranged for a three days' performance, in Whitsun Week, the first nine on Monday, the nine following on Tuesday, and the remainder on Wednesday. The first group set forth the Creation of the World and Fall of Man, with types and foreshadowings of the Coming Saviour, and

[1] He was not knighted. The title *Sir* is unauthorized.

concluding with His birth, the vision of the Shepherds, and the Adoration of the Magi.

The subject of the second day is Christ's Passion and Resurrection, answering to the Ober Ammergau Passion play, which is nothing else but the middle portion of the usual set of mediæval mysteries, reformed and purified.

On the third day the plays set forth the beginning of the Christian Church, and the close of the present dispensation by the Advent of Christ.

The expenses of each play were defrayed by a levy on the members of the company to which it was allotted, and care appears to have been taken in this allotment. Thus the "Flood" appropriately falls to the Waterleders and Drawers of Dee; the Butchers, as dealing with the lust of the Flesh, are selected to set forth Christ's Temptation; the Last Supper is exhibited by the Bakers, who are bidden to "cast good loaves abroad with a cheerful harte"; the Fletchers and Stringers describe Christ's scourging and whipping.

They were represented on a high scaffold with two stages, a higher and lower, upon four wheels. In the lower they dressed themselves, though occasionally it was made to serve for Hell; whilst the upper was covered in, so as to form a third stage on the top, representing Heaven. They acted the plays in succession in the four principal streets, beginning with the first pageant at the Abbey Gate. Then it was wheeled from thence to the Pentice at the High Cross before the Mayor, and before that was done the second came, and the first went into the Watergate Street, and from thence into the Bridge Street, and

"soe all, one after another, till all the pagiantes were played appointed for the first daye, and so likewise for the seconde and thirde day."[1]

The concourse of spectators from all the country-side must have been immense. High prices were charged for convenient places to view the performances.

The cost of the movable stages was sometimes divided between more than one company, and they were put away, after the festival, in buildings hired for the purpose.

Before the plays commenced, proclamation was made throughout the city by mounted messengers (accompanied by the Stewards of the Companies) who read the "Banes," which set forth the matter of the plays in brief.

In a copy of these "Banes" preserved among the Harleian MSS. are some lines which were erased, very possibly, in Edward VI.'s reign—

"Also maister maire of this Citie
Withall his brethryn accordingly
A solempne procession ordent hath he
To be done to the best
Appon the day of Corpus Christi
The blessed sacrament caried shalbe
And a play sett forth by the clergye
In honour of the fest.
Many torches there may you see
Marchaunts and craftys of this citie
By order passing in their degree
A goodly sight that day
They come from Saynt Maries on the Hill
The Church of Saynt Iohns untill
And there the sacrament leve they will
The sauth [sooth] as I you say."

[1] Archdeacon Rogers in Harl. MSS.

From this we may gather they had an ecclesiastical origin, and were played at first, doubtless, in Latin or Norman French, within the abbey church, by the monks and clerks attached to the minster, as a means of popular instruction in sacred history and religious doctrine. In this way they did spread abroad among an ignorant people a general knowledge of the leading outlines of the Christian faith. Before long, through the church door they slipped out into the streets and open places of public resort, followed by crowds of eager spectators. Then they were brought down more nearly to the intelligence of the common people, translated into the mother tongue, and, as human nature asserted itself and insisted upon being allowed to laugh, comic scenes were introduced. The reluctance of Noah's shrewish wife to obey her liege lord, and go into the Ark, was a stock comic scene; Balaam's troubles with his ass; Herod's bluster and swagger, to end with his being carried off by a demon, were looked for with eagerness—it was not wrong to make fun of the devil. The Shepherds' Play, which was always a favourite play in the cycle, opens with a bustling scene of rustic humour. The crowd would follow with keen interest the wrestling-bout in which the three Shepherds are thrown one after another by the boy Trowle; their attempt to imitate with their rude voices the sweet voices of the angels' song, "Gloria in Excelsis," and their quaint explanation of the words in Latin, which, as a matter of course, they take for granted to be the language used in heaven.

> "What song was this, say ye,
> That they sang to us all three?

It was glore—glore—with a glye
It was neither more nor less."

"It was glory, glory with a glo," breaks in the First Shepherd, "and much of *Celsis* was there too." Thus word by word they spell out the heavenly message. "Much he spoke of glass," says one. "Nay, it was neither glass nor glye," replies another. "Will ye hear how he sang *Celsis?*" asks the Third Shepherd. "And after of Pax or Peace he piped," affirms the first. "Yea, and he sang more too, he sang also of *a Deo.* Methought it healed my harte."

There is no sense of irreverence in all this. The impression intended to be conveyed, and which no doubt came in a degree to the spectators, was that of adoration and awe coupled with thanksgiving for the good gift. It is characteristic of the age to which the performances originally belong, that they all determine to forsake their shepherd life. Trowle counsels them for their misdeeds amends to make. He will betake himself wholly to that childe, and find an "anker" or hermitage near by, where he may watch and wait in his prayers. The Second and Third Shepherds resolve to go forth and preach in every place, while the First Shepherd will go barefoot into the wilderness and there bemoan his sins. The religious teachers of that age set forth "a fugitive and cloistered virtue" as the highest form of the religious life. The mediæval mind had not grasped the truth that

"We need not bid for cloistered cell,
Our neighbour and our work farewell."

The scenery and other stage furniture would be of the most primitive kind. When the Star appears in

the East, it is made to move by a little angel carrying it away in his arms, and the Kings follow it by coming down from the stage, mounting on horses in the street, and riding round for a few minutes among the spectators.

Well-trained minstrels were provided, with pipe, tabre, and flute, and good voices, engaged for considerable sums from the Abbey choir.[1] From the Abbey, and St. John's and St. Mary's, would come their choicest vestments, copes and tunicles and altar-cloths, though William of Wykeham had denounced the clergy who lent the vestments of the Church for this purpose as guilty of sacrilege.

There are, as might be expected, several anachronisms, as when Noah's wife swears "Be Christe!" and Noah "By St. John."

The Puritans denounced these plays as altogether abominable, a profanation of the sacred Scriptures, and made earnest and continued efforts to suppress them. In 1571 they prevailed upon Archbishop Grindal of York to issue an inhibition, which was, however, disregarded, and Sir John Savage, then mayor, was brought before the Privy Council in 1575,

[1] 1561. To Sir Io: Ienson for songes ... ... xii*d.*
To the five boyes singing ... ... ii*s.* vi*d.*
1567. To two of the Clarkes of the Minster ... viii*d.*
1569. For the Clergy for our songes ... ... iiii*s.* ii*d.*
To the Clarke for the lone of a Cope, an Altar Cloth, and Tunicle ... ... x*d.*
1575. For Copes and Clothe ... ... xii*d.*
To John Shawe for lone of a Doctor's gowne and a hode for our eldest Doctor xii*d.*
Chester in Plantagenet and Tudor Times, p. 311.

with a previous mayor, Mr. Hankey, for "causing the plays to be set forward." They continued to be acted at irregular intervals as late as 1607, and in the copy of the Banes for 1600 apology is made for containing "some things not warranted by Holy Writ," but—

> "As all that see them shall most welcome be,
> So all that hear them, wee most humbly praye
> Not to compare this matter or storye
> With the age or tyme wherein we presently staye,
> But in the tyme of ignorance, wherein we did stray."

Before their final suppression by the Puritans as "Popish plays," certain revisions and omissions had taken place. The play of the Assumption, which was acted before Lord Strange at the High Cross in 1488, and before Prince Arthur in 1497, both at the Abbey Gates and at the High Cross, and also in 1515 in St. John's Churchyard, was evidently one of the Chester Cycle, and is referred to in the Banes as being provided by "the worshipful wyves of the towne." It is omitted from Bellin's transcript in 1600, and was in all probability discontinued in Edward VI.'s reign, in deference to the religious feeling of that time.

The Mystery Plays had, for their original object, the distinct purpose of setting before the mind of the community the leading outlines of the Christian faith. They had, further, an influence on general education. It was not as mere spectators that the Chester public assisted at these Mysteries. The performance was a local work of art, in which the entire city had a personal share. The actors were their own fellow-citizens.

In the Midsummer Show which ultimately displaced the Mystery Play, there was no higher purpose than

to amuse the people. For a time the two representations went on together, but when the Puritans were successful in their objections, some features of the Mystery plays were adopted.

In the annual procession through the city, some of the actors would ride, dressed in character. The Company of Butchers had the Devil dressed in feathers to go before them (from their play of the Pinacle or Temptation). The Smiths, who had played the Purification, engaged the learned Doctors and a child representing Jesus mounted on horseback, whom they call in their accounts "the little god," and who was decorated with ribbons, and had his face gilded. The Barbers and Barber Surgeons, to whom was allotted "Abraham and Isaac," had to provide "one to ride Abraham, a yonge striplinge boy to ride Isaacke." Balaam and his Ass appeared at the head of the Linen-drapers and Bricklayers.

Perhaps we have a survival of this custom in the procession which heads the Oddfellows and Foresters when they "walk," headed by mounted officers and a boy on horseback gaily bedecked with rosettes and ribbons. The great features of the show were the marvellous structures, figures of monstrous size in pasteboard and buckram, tricked out with tinsel, gold and silver leaf, each carried by two or more men. At Chester, as in other parts of England, there was a dragon with six naked boys beating at it. It is said of such a custom in Oxfordshire, that the dragon was carried about in memory of a famous victory by the King of the West Saxons over Ethelbald King of Mercia, who lost his standard surmounted by a golden dragon. It may

well be that the introduction of the dragon has an historical reason which is lost in the mists of antiquity.

Puritan feeling objected even to this quasi-dramatic representation, which savoured of sin, and one of the mayors of this way of thinking put an end to these pageants, and broke up the giants and other "properties." "Henry Hardware, Mayor in 1599, was not liked by the Commons, because he caused the giants in the Midsummer Show to be put down and broken and not to goe, the Devil in his fethers which rode for the Butchers he put away, and caused a boy to ride as other companies did, and the cuppes and cannes and Dragon and naked boyes, but caused a man in complete armour to goe before the Show in their stead." This prohibition did not last long, for his successor in the Mayoralty, 1600, "restored agayne all the ancient customs he found the firste tyme he was mayor [1584], and put down by Mr. Hardware."

An early statute of Richard II., renewed aftewards more than once, prohibited the games of tennis, football, quoits, dice, kailes, and the like, to servingmen and labourers, and frequent presentments occur of persons disobeying the law. It was, of course, with the view of providing for the defence of the kingdom, and giving more time for archery. It is interesting to note how football, so popular a game in the north, should have brought on those engaged in it a penalty of xii*d.* The offence was aggravated by its being committed on Sundays and holydays, and during divine service. In Manchester, 1609, at the Court Leet, complaint "is made of great disorder heretofore in our town, and the inhabitants greatly wronged and

charged with making and amending of their glass windows broken yearly, and spoiled by a company of lewd and disordered persons using that unlawful exercise of playing with the footeball in y^e^ streets, breaking many men's windows and glass at their pleasures and other great enormities." Another game forbidden with football was called "giddye gaddye [tip-cat], or the catts pallett, which is prohibited in the churchyard or in any street."

Among the curious ordinances of Northwich Grammar School, while the scholars are directed to "refresh themselves," according to old custom there and elsewhere at Christmas and Easter, by barring out their master, they are bidden to practise archery and eschew bowling, card-playing, and quoiting.

Wakes and Church-ales, Welsh-weddings and Bid-ales, were favourite occasions for festive gatherings in Cheshire and Lancashire. The wakes were doubtless originally the festivals of the dedication of the parish church. Church-ales and bid-ales arose from the desire which the churchwardens had to raise funds for the church expenses and the repair of the fabric. By way of enlivenment to the people, they brewed a certain portion of strong ale to be ready for the gathering, when it was sold to the visitors, the better sort of whom, in addition to what they paid for drink, contributed something towards the collection. By this means it is said "poor parishes have cast their bells, repaired their tower, beautified their churches, and raised stocks for the poor." Bid-ales were used to set up an honest man decayed in his estate. In Chester the mayor and aldermen found it necessary

to put a severe check on all the kinds of "ales," whether so called or held under the name of priest-offerings, gospel-singing, or Welsh-weddings. The gatherings were the cause of much riot and disorder, and consequently fines were imposed equally upon those who "got them up," and upon those who attended. Rush-bearing, which is still observed in Aldford, Farndon, and in the Macclesfield Forest, is a kind of wakes.[1] It is doubtless a survival of the method of providing for a substitute for the modern carpet, but it is to be noticed that it also includes the decorating the graves of deceased friends.

WILMSLOW CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS:

1600. Paid for a pint of wine at Wilmeslowe Wakes for Holy Communion ... v*d.*

1621 and 1631. Paid for dressinge the Church against the Rushbearinge... ij*s.*

1661 and 1664. Paid for getting forth of all the mats, rushes, and makinge the Church cleane against the Rush-bearinge ... ... iij*s.*

1663. Spent the 15th day of August in attending to see good order at the Rushbearinge ... ... iiij*d.*

1670. For sweeping the Church before the Rushbearing ... ... ij*d.*

[1] The vicar of Wildboar Clough, Macclesfield, writes that part of the proceedings takes place in the churchyard. The Forest Church is situated 1,345 feet above the sea-level. The offertory at the last Rush-bearing Service (September 9, 1894), collected at the churchyard gate, amounted to £15 2*s.* 6*d.*

For mowing and getting up Rushes to dress the Church ... ... *is.*

PRESTBURY ACCOUNTS:

1622. Spent at the Rushbearinge ... ... xiiij*d.*
1727. Paid to a Sidesman att a Rush-bearing ... ... iis. vi*d.*
1732. July 5 and 15. Spent on 9 severall Townships at the Rushbearings when they brought rushes and flowers ... ... £1 7*s.* 8*d.*

Wakes and rush-bearing were a custom at Mottram, and at Taxal the rush-cart is mentioned as late as 1762 and 1774.

Some of the amusements of the age were by no means so harmless or humane. Among the relics of national barbarism was that of cocking or cock-fighting. Provision was made for this game at Chester, as in London and other large towns. The plot of rising ground outside the walls went from early times by the name of Cockfight Hill, and William, Earl of Derby, in 1619, "made a faire cock-pit under S[t]. John's in a garden by the water side, to which resorted gent: of all parts, and great cocking was used a long while."

Bear-baiting was not unknown in Cheshire and Lancashire. The Congleton accounts record—

1613. Paid men to fetch Shelderden with his bears at Whitsuntide, but he refused to come because there was cocking ... ... 1*s.* 3*d.*

1613. Paid Mr. Horden to fetch Brock, who came with his bears and was paid 6*s.* 8*d.* because Shelderden refused to come.[1]

At Chester this cruel sport was finally forbidden, 38 Eliz. The expense had been defrayed out of the city funds, though the clergy had repeatedly denounced it from the pulpit. At last it was enacted that "hensfurth within this city there shalbe neither play nor bearebeat upon the cities charges, and that noe citizens upon payn of punishment shall repayre out of this city nor out of the Liberties or pariches thereof to any play or bearebeat."

Bulls were baited at the High Cross in Chester, and especially at the outgoing of the mayor, who furnished the barbarous sport. Henry Hardware in 1599 took up the bull-ring, but it was continued under later mayors. It was not till the year 1754 that the Corporation withdrew their sanction of this cruel and debasing pastime by absenting themselves. An ineffectual attempt was made later to abolish it altogether, but it continued until the year 1803, when it was finally suppressed.

Such were some of the amusements of "Merry England" in the Tudor and Stuart periods. But there is a darker side to the picture. If men and women were gayer, and gave themselves up for the

[1] A proverb is current of Congleton that the townspeople sold their Bible to buy a bear; but the correct version is that they used some money which had been saved up to buy a new Bible for the church in purchasing a bear, and were content to use the old worn-out Bible.

time to wakes and goodly pageants, there were very severe punishments for those who came under the ban of the law, and little mercy was shown. The punishments were, on the whole, severer than in the Plantagenet period. The gallows at the two entrances into the city of Chester, and in other large towns, were never without their grisly burden, left there hanging in chains as a terror to evil-doers. On the gates of the city were stuck the quarters of criminals.

It was no light punishment in those days to be condemned for even a few hours to the common gaol under the Northgate at Chester. It was in very truth a very hole of a dungeon, noisome and pestilential, and never without a considerable number of occupants, chained with heavy fetters and depending, to a great extent, upon charity for food. Even the heartless Dudley, Earl of Leicester, 1578, was forced to remind the mayor and justices of Chester of the ordinary law of humanity. "It is very pitiful to heare of that prisoners are dedd by famyne since the last assizes, and those that be lyvinge are very many, and veryteble in like peril of death."

In Manchester Constables' Accounts reference is often made to the Lower Dungeon, which was beneath the ordinary dungeon on Salford Bridge, approached by a ladder, and in all probability below the level of the water. Mention is also made of the "Cage," in which prisoners were confined in the daytime, fitted with iron bars through which they appealed to passers-by for charity. In 1618, no less than seventy-four persons, forty-six men and twenty-eight women, are stated to have been whipped in Manchester. This

would give an average of more than one a week, so that the inhabitants must have been well accustomed to the sight of men and women "stripped naked from the middle upward, and openly whipped until his or her body be bloody." Those who had been whipped were given passes stating that the culprit had been punished as a rogue and vagabond, and the place to which such person is limited to go and within what time. Some mercy was shown at times, for there are many entries of cripples being conveyed in a wheel-barrow or hand-barrow from one district to another.

Besides the stocks and the pillory, with its barbarous mutilation of ear-slicing and ear-marking, and the cuck-stool for scolds and wrangling dames, there was the brank or scold's bridle, of which there appears to be more specimens left in Cheshire and Lancashire than elsewhere. This was a kind of open helmet, with a flat piece of iron projecting which pressed upon the unruly tongue and kept that member quiet, while other pieces of iron went round and over the head, and then padlocked. A chain was attached, by which the woman was led through the town. Some of the branks had the tongue-piece which was inserted in the mouth studded with small spikes, so that every movement would be attended with torture.

This form of punishment was used in Congleton as late as 1823.

The statute passed in Elizabeth's reign providing work for the poor, and the system of collections in churches for the poor, were duly carried out in the diocese. Many benevolent persons gave or left sums of money in furtherance of this laudable object, and

great trouble seems to have been taken in administering the funds.

The Manchester Court Leet Accounts for 1653 contain an interesting record of the foundation of an English Library in Jesus Chapel, on the south side of the Collegiate Church. It received a handsome bequest from Humphrey Chetham. The library gradually fell into decay, and in 1830 nothing remained of the first Free Library in Manchester but the desks, a few tattered books, and remnants of loose chains.

The records in the Chester Diocesan Registry contain a large number of references to CHILD MARRIAGES,[1] and show how frequently a harvest of domestic unhappiness resulted from these ill-assorted unions. Among the cases recorded is that of Joan Chaderton, daughter of William Chaderton, Bishop of Chester. She was married in 1582, in the Bishop's palace, at the age of nine, to Richard Brooke, who had nearly completed his eleventh year. The marriage was ratified in 1586 by the consent of the young folk, but twenty years later it is said that the bishop had no great comfort of that matrimony of his only daughter, who was then living apart from her husband.

John Rigmarden at the age of three was married to a bride of five. He was carried in the arms of a clergyman, who coaxed him to repeat the words in the service. Before he had got through his lesson, the child declared he would learn no more that day. The priest answered, "You must speak a little more, and then go play you."

[1] For full details, cf. *Child Marriages, Divorces, etc.*, by Dr. Furnivall in Early Eng. Text Society, Orig. Series, No. 108.

In 1538-9 Robert Parre of Backford was married at the age of three to Elizabeth Rogerson. He was "lured for an apple bie his uncle to goe to the church," and was borne thither "in the armes of Edward Bunburie, his uncle, who held hym in hys armes the tyme that he was maried to the said Elizabethe, att which tyme the saide Robert colde scarce speke."

In 33 Hen. VIII. (1541), Alexander Woodward, "under the age off eghte yeris," was married, in the parish church of Wigan, to Cicelie, "about the age off x yeris and under xi."

Several instances occur of such marriages in 1609, 1619-20.

"These child marriages were absolutely binding, and no further ceremony was required to make the parties man and wife. They had simply to come together when they reached their years of discretion."

CHAPTER X

Bishop Morton—The *Book of Sports*—Bishop John Bridgman—Efforts to establish order and uniformity—Appropriation of seats—Trials for witchcraft—Visitation of the plague—Recusants dealt with—William Prynne's scurrilous attacks.

GERARD MASSIE, Rector of Wigan, was appointed by King James to succeed Bishop Lloyd in 1616, but before he could be consecrated, he was taken ill and died in London. After a few months' delay, the King selected Dr. Thomas Morton, Dean of Winchester, to fill the vacant see. He was the son of Richard Morton, alderman and mercer, of York, and had in that city as his school-fellow, the conspirator, Guido Fawkes. Dr. Morton came to Chester with a great reputation for learning and earnest devotion. His *Apologia Catholica*, on "the marks of a true Church," a defence of the Church of England against the Romanists, published in 1605, pointed him out as one of the ablest living controversialists against Rome. Casaubon, whom he met in London, wrote to his friend Heinsius that there were only three men in England who deserved the name of theologian, Bishop Andrews of Ely, Dean Overall of St. Paul's, and Dean Morton of Winchester. It happened that after his

consecration, July 7, 1616, he fell ill of a dangerous fever, and proceeding at once to his diocese on his recovery, was met at the borders and brought into the city of Chester by "a great number of knights and other of the best gentlemen of the County, beside the Clergy." He found the diocese in a disorganized condition owing to his predecessor's laxity, and proceeded forthwith to inculcate obedience to Church discipline. It was characteristic of his method that he sought to do as much by argument as by compulsion. For this purpose he called a conference of the leaders among the Puritan clergy,[1] and discussed with them the three points which most grieved their conscience, the Use of the Surplice, the Sign of the Cross at Baptism, and Kneeling at Holy Communion. He published a pamphlet with a "Relation of the Conference: the Defence of the Three Innocent Ceremonies." This appeared in 1619, the year after his translation to Lichfield.

His name is especially associated with the famous declaration popularly known as the *Book of Sports*, which King James directed him to draw up. The King, in the course of one of his progresses from Scotland, stopped for a Sunday, August 17, at Hoghton Tower in Lancashire. Here a petition was presented to him from a great number of Lancashire peasants and tradesmen, praying that they might be no longer debarred from their lawful recreations and honest exercises after evening prayer on Sundays. Shortly before the King's arrival an attempt had been made by some of the magistrates, in accordance with the

[1] The principal was the Vicar of Bunbury, William Hinde.

Puritan view of Sunday, to suppress these amusements. King James promised indulgence to his good people within the county of Lancaster.

The villagers, however, acting upon this promise, in revenge for the restrictions which had been put upon them, gave way to greater licence than before. Instead of contenting themselves with archery, leaping, May-games, and dancing in the afternoon as aforetime, they gathered in noisy groups near the church door while the morning service was proceeding, and did their best to distract the attention of the worshippers by the sharpest notes of their music and by their boisterous laughter. The King consulted Bishop Morton, and by his advice it was ordained that while nothing should be permitted which might disturb the congregation during the hours of divine service, it was left to every man's conscience to decide whether or no he would take part in the amusements after the evening service was over. No compulsion was to be used. But it was stipulated, as a check upon recusancy, that no one who absented himself from the service, or did not continue in the church throughout the service, or did not attend his own parish church, should be allowed to take part in the afternoon's amusements. The two latter restrictions were intended to exclude Puritans, who often went to church after the reading of the prayers, and frequently journeyed to distant churches to hear their favourite preachers.[1]

[1] An important clause is as follows: "And as for our good people's lawful recreation, our pleasure likewise is that, after the end of divine service, our good people be not disturbed, letted, or discouraged from any lawful recreation, such as danc-

This declaration, which had been called forth by the peculiar circumstances of Lancashire, the King determined to publish to the whole kingdom, but owing to the strong opposition excited, the order for the general reading was withdrawn.

Two years after this incident, Bishop Morton was translated to Lichfield. He is described as small of stature, upright in person, and sprightly in motion, preserving the vigour of youth in extreme old age; of a sweet and serious countenance; grave and sober in speech, manifesting a gentleness which won all hearts and disarmed enmity. His habits were ascetic. He slept on a straw bed, and rose at four a.m., never retiring to rest till ten p.m., drank wine but seldom and then sparingly, and only took one full meal in the day. He never discarded the Episcopal habit, even when it was perilous to wear it.

King James was fortunate in the selection of his chaplain, John Bridgman, as a successor to Bishop Morton. Born at Exeter, the eldest son of Thomas Bridgman, he began at an early age to secure preferment, and after holding a prebend at Exeter and at

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ing, either men or women, archery for men, leaping, vaulting, or any other such harmless recreation, nor for having of May-games, Whitsun-ales, and morris-dances, and the setting up of maypoles and other sports therewith used, so as the same be had in due and convenient time without impediment or neglect of divine service, and that women shall have leave to carry rushes to church for the decorating of it according to their old custom. But withal we do here account still as prohibited all unlawful games to be used on Sundays only, as bear and bull-baiting, interludes, and (at all times in the meaner sort of people by law prohibited) bowling."

Peterborough, besides divers important rectories and vicarages, he was appointed in 1615 to the valuable living of Wigan. When he was appointed to the bishopric of Chester, he retained this rectory *in commendam*, as well as his prebendal stalls at Exeter and Lichfield, exchanging later the Exeter prebend for the Rectory of Bangor Monachorum. He was a staunch adherent of his friend Laud in doctrine and discipline, and laboured assiduously to establish order and uniformity in his diocese. This characteristic was shown in his method of dealing with the seating of Wigan parish church, which was a "burning question" in the town. It is interesting as an early instance of appropriation of seats in church. He found that the parishioners were claiming a right to certain seats. But "it appeared by the oaths of divers old men that within the memory of man there were few or no seats in the church, and to that day many seats were used by divers men which stood over burials of other kindreds, and therefore, notwithstanding their pretence, he was sure they had no proper right to particular places; yet because he aimed only at the beauty and decency of the church in the new seating, he promised not to question their places for that time, but on the understanding that he will neither confirm their claim nor give them title or right to any place, but leave them in their disordered places, so that the seats be uniform. Only he advised them to rank the best in the highest seats, and to place on the one side only men, and on the other side their wives in order, and to seclude children and servants from sitting with their masters or mistresses." He

had a similar dispute about seats to settle at St. Oswald's, Chester (the south transept of the cathedral). The same spirit of order he sought to enforce in the cathedral body. The Dean and Chapter were required to observe the rule of residence, to resort to divine service in surplice and hood, and to preach in their turns. The Minor Canons and members of the choir were to attend with regularity and punctuality—"every one that shall come tardy after the Confession is said, or goe out before the end of Divine Service, to be punished with a fine." The organist's neglect in teaching the choristers is reprehended. "*Plumbi* sacra fames" appears to have been felt at Chester, for the Receiver or Treasurer is warned against dilapidating the church or taking away any of the lead.

Bishop Bridgman's episcopate is associated with the witchcraft trials which disgraced the Stuart period. In 1612 a number of wretched women from the neighbourhood of Pendle Forest in Lancashire had been hanged at Lancaster upon a charge of witchcraft. About 1634 fresh stories were circulated about the "practices" of witches, which were confessed, after careful investigation, to have been started by a mischievous youth, son of Edmund Robinson, mason, of Newchurch, who, "hearing talk of the witch feast kept at Mocking Tower in Pendle Forest about twenty years since, made up the stories of the later meeting to avoid his mother's correction for not bringing home her kine; but perceiving that many folks gave ear to him, he grew confident in it more and more."

Upon this wicked invention seven persons (one man and six women) were condemned, but the judge having doubts about the truth of the charges, communicated with the Council, who directed Bishop Bridgman to examine into the case of the condemned. He reported that three, John Spencer, Alice Higgin, Jennet Loynd, had died in gaol; a fourth was sick, past hope of recovery. Of the remaining three, Margaret Johnson, a widow of sixty, confessed to having been a witch six years, brought thereto by the vexations of bad neighbours, but the Bishop declares her to be of weak mind and memory. The other two denied the charge. Frances Dicconson wife of John, a husbandman in Pendle Forest in Whalley, attributed the accusation to petty malice on the part of neighbours, with whom she had a quarrel about butter. The other, Mary Spencer, aged twenty, of Burnley, said that her father and mother had been condemned last assizes for witches. Before her imprisonment she used to go to Brierely Church, could repeat the Lord's Prayer and the Commandments. As to the story about her calling her pail to follow her as she ran, she would often trundle it downhill, and call it to come after her if she outstripped it. When she was in court she could have explained everything, "but the wind was so loud and the throng so great as she could not hear the evidence against her."

The last touch completes the tragedy of the situation. We see, as by a lightning flash, the forlorn and unfriended girl, to whom the laws of her country denied the services of an advocate, baffled by the noisy babble around her in her efforts to speak a word

on behalf of her innocence, her very judge, the Bishop, prejudiced against her. Accused and accusers were summoned to London, and there the women were examined by the King's surgeon and five others, and ten certificated midwives. A certificate is given, July 2, 1634, Surgeons' Hall, Mugwell Street, that they find on the bodies of Janet Hargraves, Frances Dicconson, and Mary Spencer nothing unnatural nor anything like a teat or mark, nor on the body of Margaret Johnson anything which could be appealed to as evidence that her blood had been sucked.

In the spring of the following year four more women were condemned to death as witches at the Lancaster Assizes. Bishop Bridgman was again directed to investigate the case. He found that two had already died in gaol, and of the others, one had been condemned on the accusation of a madman, and on the evidence of a beggar-woman of ill repute.

A violent outbreak of the plague in 1605 caused very great loss of life in Manchester and the neighbourhood, as well as in Chester and the surrounding district, where it had been severely felt since September 1602.

Hollinworth, writing about 1650, thus refers to it: "1605. The Lord visited the towne (as 40 yeares before [1564] and 40 years after [1645]) with a sore pestilence: there died about 1000 persons, amongst which was Mr. Kirk, chaplaine of the Colledge, and his wife and foure children: all the time of the sicknesse Mr. Burne preached in the towne so long as he durst (by reason of the unrulinesse of infected persons and want of government), and then hee went

and preached in a feeld neare to Shooter's brooke, the townspeople beeing on one syde him and the country people on another."

Fairs were generally discontinued. The court of Exchequer, for the County Palatine of Chester, was transferred to Tarvin, and the Assizes held at Nantwich.

In 1631 a fresh outbreak of the plague in the country round Chester caused the discontinuance of the annual fair, and in 1648, before the citizens of Chester had scarcely recovered from the hardships of the long siege, it raged so violently that upwards of 2000 persons died of it, and the city became so deserted that grass grew in the streets at the High Cross.

In the Churchwardens' Accounts of St. Mary's, Chester, in 1603, 8*d.* was "paid for pitch, rosen, and frankincense to perfume ye Church after Tom his goinge out of the steeple," and a further sum of 21*d.* "for makinge a Cabbin for Tom."

The following year 8*d.* was expended on "frankincence and pitch to perfume the church; 20*d.* was paid to Bedforde, clerke of St. Peter's, for making up the accomptes for the Collections for the Cabbins," which were built at the waterside, near the New Tower, and in the quarries without the walls, for the isolation of the infected.

In 1605 "Paid for v. pounds of pitche to perfume the churche after the buryall of Wydowe Tropp, for she dyed of the sicknesse, viij*d.*"

Bishop Bridgman treated the Puritans in his diocese at the beginning of his episcopate with marked leni-

ency, endeavouring to win them over to obedience by persuasion and reason. An instance is given of this in the case of Thomas Paget, minister of Blackley, who had been cited already by Bishop Morton for his disobedience to the Church rubrics. He was asked by Bishop Bridgman to give his reasons for refusing to kneel at Holy Communion, and quoted our Lord's words, "In vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." The Bishop replied that he expected a more learned argument, founded on the reclining posture of our Lord and His disciples at the institution of the Sacrament. Then stretching himself at full length on a bench by the side of the table, and leaning on his elbow, he asked whether it was decent and proper for a congregation to partake of the Sacrament in that recumbent position. Still refusing to comply, Mr. Paget was suspended for two years. Samuel Eaton, of West Kirby, the founder of Congregationalism in Cheshire, was suspended in 1631, and went to New England. Richard Mather, of Toxteth Park Chapel, near Liverpool, rather than "wear the popish livery of the surplice, or betray the simplicity of the gospel by any approval of ceremonial worship," left for Boston in America. To such emigration George Herbert, in his *Church Militant*, published 1631, refers in the lines—

> "Religion stands on tiptoe in our land,
> Ready to pass to the American strand."

But the licence which the Puritans claimed, and the disorders consequent upon it, made it impossible for

a bishop like Dr. Bridgman, with his regard for decency and order, to overlook such defiant disobedience. He earnestly expostulated with his friend and then neighbour, Mr. Angier, minister of Ringley, and though there was a bond of intimacy between their wives, the Bishop advised him, after suspension, twice in one year, had no effect, to leave Ringley and seek preferment at Denton, less directly under the Bishop's eyes. But he was not always so lenient, and the Churchwardens' Accounts of several parishes in the diocese bear silent testimony to his determined purpose of enforcing obedience.

At Prestbury we read, under 1634, "Spent at severall times about the bishopp's warrant for the apprehension of John Scurrior and others, who were not conformable to our Church of England, iij*s.* x*d.*

"1625. For making Billetts to every Chappell in the parishe concerning recusants and nonconformists, xvj*d.*"

At St. Mary's, Chester: "1635, Paid to the Consistory court for nott goeinge to the uttermost bounds of the parish every Rogation weeke, xxij*d.*

"1620. John Bradshaw, esq., James Gosnell, and 24 others of the parish of Bolton cited before Bishop Bridgman at Chester for not communicating at Easter or for not receiving kneeling. Enjoined to receive upon Easter Sunday or Good Friday next."

This strictness of administration naturally provoked the Puritans, and it is not surprising to find that efforts were made to find occasion against him. An illustration of this may be given from the churchwardens' books of St. John's, Chester, where, under

1637, it is recorded, "Paid the ringers for not ringing when the Bishop came to view the Church, 3*s.* 4*d.*"

James Martin, who had been put out from the King's preachership at Ormskirk and the vicarage of Preston, in a letter to the Council, 1633, charges Bishop Bridgman with pillaging the county under colour of commutations of penance, and with partiality in the treatment of certain persons. The charges were considered of importance enough to warrant inquiry before the Court of High Commission, which was ordered to assemble as speedily as possible. The Council (June 30) reported that "many of them were frivolous and scandalous," and some were admitted by Sir Henry Martin to be "unwarrantable and impertinent."

The King writing November 19 to Archbishop Laud and the High Commission, in reference to the suit depending against the Bishop concerning the moneys (£10,000) pretended to be in his hands for commutations and some miscarriage in his ordinary jurisdiction, states that he finds it not so heinous as he first had reason to suspect, and considering that the Bishop is a person of eminency in the Church, and one of whose good affection to the King's service he had often had experience, directs all prosecution in that Court against the Bishop to cease.

Secretary Windebank notes a month later, that the Bishop was admonished not to carry too heavy a hand on Wigan—the inhabitants groan under the Bishop's hand. They were here when the King was in Scotland to make their own grievances, but they saw things

carried with such violence for the Bishop that they durst not stir.

The Lord-Keeper at the same time writes to the Bishop, that his Majesty having dealt so graciously with him, and put an end to questions which might have been of trouble to him, he advised the Bishop to forget any ill conceit and show no ill affection to those of his diocese that have been required to declare their knowledge upon the business lately in question. His charity and gravity shall not need persuasion or further advice.

William Prynne makes him the subject of a violent attack in his pamphlet, *New Discovery of the Prelate's Tyranny*. The tyranny consisted of this, that some citizens of Chester who had made a demonstration in favour of Prynne when he was passing through Chester on his way to prison at Carnarvon, were punished for it by fine and imprisonment.

A few months later the Houses of Parliament passed an order to sequester the estates of the bishops and other delinquents, and Bishop Bridgman was fined £3000. When the Parliamentary forces surrounded Chester in 1645, he left his house in the hands of his son Orlando, and retired to Morton Hall, near Oswestry, where he died in 1652.

In the administration of what was the most difficult diocese in England at the time, he displayed the greatest judgment and forbearance. "He was essentially a scholar and a gentleman. He set a good example in the reparation of churches by his own work at Wigan and elsewhere. His munificence was seen by his costly gifts to his cathedral. He acquired

the respect of the great bulk of the clergy and laity in his diocese, and received from the richer and more influential of the laity much valuable assistance in prosecuting his works of charity and reformation."

The account which he compiled of the statistics of his immense diocese, known as Bishop Bridgman's Ledger, is a most valuable and important record.

CHAPTER XI

Petition against Root and Branch Bill—The Cheshire Attestation — Protest against seditious preaching — Cheshire clergy deprived—The Engagement—Visits of Commissioners for Pious Uses—Sacrament Certificates.

CHESHIRE was forward in opposing the new method of Church government which was to supersede episcopacy (afterwards called "Root and Branch Bill") as proposed in 1641. In the petition presented to the House of Lords by Sir Thomas Aston, Bart., on behalf of the County Palatine, the petitioners, while expressing a hope that the Lords "will regulate the rigour of ecclesiastical courts, deprecated the new system by which they feared the desire was to introduce an absolute innovation of Presbyteriall government, whereby wee who are now governed by the Canon and Civill Lawes, dispensed by twenty-six ordinaries (easily responsall to Parliament for any deviation from the rule of Law), conceive wee should become exposed to the more arbitrary government of a numerous Presbytery, who, together with their ruling elders, will arise to neere 40,000 Church governors." The petition was subscribed by "four noblemen, four score and odde knights and baronets, knights and

esquires; divines, threescore and ten; gentlemen, three hundred and odde; freeholders and other inhabitants above six thousand, all of the same county." A counter-petition was stated to be got up by the anti-episcopalians, with double the number of subscribers, but it has been doubted whether this was not spurious. Another petition was sent up from Cheshire in 1642, and presented by the Lord-Keeper, signed by 94 lords, knights, justices, and esquires, 440 gentlemen of quality, 80 divines, and 8936 freeholders and others. The prayer was that "there be admitted no Innovation of Doctrine or Liturgie, and that some speedy course be taken to suppress such Schismatiques and Separatists whose factious spirits doe evidently endanger the peace both of Church and State."

The miserable end for which long preparation had been made in the pulpit and the press, and not least of all by the fanatic preachers of Lancashire and Cheshire, had come. The Solemn League and Covenant declared one of its objects to be the extirpation of Popery and Prelacy,[1] and in furtherance of this design the form of worship according to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England was to be abolished. The clergy who refused to accept

[1] This document is generally considered to be exclusively confined to Scotland. But it was also signed in England, in accordance with the clause of the treaty. At Woodchurch, in the Wirral Peninsula, is preserved the list of signatures of eighty parishioners, headed by the rector. It is described as "The National Covenant taken by the parishioners of Woodchurch, &c., the 14th day of March, 1646. Wee, the inhabitants of the Parish of Woodchurch, with our hands lifted up unto the Most High God, doe sweare," &c.

this Covenant were to be deprived. Walker, in his *Sufferings of the Clergy*, gives a list (but not a complete one) of the clergy in Cheshire who were sequestered in 1643-4 for refusing the Covenant. The number is about thirty. Besides Bishop Bridgman he names Dean Mallory, Archdeacon Snell, four prebendaries, the rectors or vicars of Barrow, Woodchurch, Hart-hill, Audlem, Astbury, Over, Mobberley, Gawsworth, Bowden, Christleton, Cheadle, Tattenhall, Eastham, Aldford, Malpas, Nantwich, Brereton, Alderley, Wilmslow, Frodsham, West Kirby, St. Mary's, Chester. Of Mr. Eaton, Rector of Aldford, it is said that he was "dispossessed by a party of soldiers, who most barbarously carried out his wife and placed her on a dunghill, where they so much insulted and abused her that she grew distracted, and died in that condition."

Parliament followed up the issue of the Directory in place of the Book of Common Prayer, by an ordinance directing the formation of classes, and the division of England and Wales into Presbyteries. This plan was only carried out in London and Lancashire. The year 1646 has been termed the "Bustling Year," from the struggles between the Presbyterians and Independents. In no part of England was the struggle keener than in the diocese of Chester. The Independents appear to have obtained a considerable foothold in Cheshire, though there, as elsewhere, the intended ministers were mainly Presbyterians. Fifty-nine Cheshire ministers joined in 1648 in the "Cheshire Attestation" against Independency, but it had in the interval spread in

the county and become too strong to be suppressed. On the other hand, in Lancashire the Presbyterian form was the most popular. It is interesting to note how the Council of State, who owed their position in a great measure to the vigorous denunciation of Episcopacy by the preachers, complain in 1650, when an attempt was made to substitute the "Engagement" for the "Covenant," of the "pulpit incendiaries." "The mischief (of seditious preaching) had spread into many parts, and has had too much effect upon some of the well-meaning, yet in no place have their boldness come to that height or their endeavours wrought so great a change in perverting men's minds as in Lancashire—a place that through all the heat of the war, and in the greatest power of the enemy, did so much for their own liberty and for the cause maintained by Parliament against that tyranny. Insurrections and commotions are too frequent, and the Justices of Assize are directed to make strict inquiry after the preachers of these seditious preachings, and take information of what their expressions have been in their praying and preachings against the present Government, or concerning any *matter of State, which things are not their proper work.*"

Richard Bradshaw, writing from Chester to President Bradshaw, March 2, 1650, reports that "there is not one justice of peace, mayor, recorder, or other, except Mr. Aldersey and myself, that have either taken the Engagement or given countenance to them that have; the commonalty, who are chiefly led by the example of their governors, have not yet subscribed, but some few excise officers and half-a-score of the best affected.

The reason of the people's backwardness is chiefly the frequent deterring arguments from pulpits, whence the rigid Presbyterians shake the minds of men, setting the Engagement directly in opposition to the Covenant, charging Covenant breaking and perjury upon all that have subscribed, and labouring to render them odious to the people. They assert that by authority of Parliament they pressed the Covenant upon their people, and now being persuaded that the present Engagement clashes with it, they are bound to warn the people of their danger. If under this pretence of duty they amuse the people, and some speedy course be not taken to restrain them, in this county and Lancashire, the prejudice may be great." He advises the sending of two or three able ministers to clear the equity of subscribing, as consistent with the real ends of the Covenant.

The Churchwardens' Accounts in the various parishes in the diocese bear silent witness to the intense interest with which this sad struggle was followed, in which King and subjects were engaged, which set father against child, brother against brother, and which resulted in the brutal defacement and degradation of so many sacred buildings, hallowed by the worship of many successive generations.

It is not surprising to find that the church bells in Chester were used more than once to announce the public joy at some success of the Royalist army.

Under the date 1643 in the accounts of St. Mary's, Chester—

Pd. for Ringinge for Rejoyceinge for his Majesties victories the 8th of July, by a warrant from the Mayor and Commissioners ... ... iiij*s.*

Pd. for Ringinge the evening after the publique thanks giveinge the 25th of July, after the enemy was gone from before this citty, by commaund of ye mayor ... ... ij*s.* vj*d.*

Pd. for ringinge for joy of the victory neere Middlewich on St. Steven's Day ... ij*s.* vj*d.*

Pd. for ringinge at the Cominge in of Prince Rupertt, March the 11th, 1643 ... ... ij*s.* vj*d.*

Pd. for ringinge the 25th of March for joy of the victory by Prince Rupertt over the Enemy at the seige of Newark, by speciall commaund of the Mayor and governor ... ... ij*s.* iiij*d.*

But these accounts also tell of other than joyful events. We find entries of the carrying out of the order which condemned the use of fonts as superstitious, and directed "that children be baptized from a bason, not in the places where fonts, in the time of popery, were unfitly and superstitiously placed;" of the introduction of the "Directory for Public Worship" in place of that "pious, ancient, and laudable form of Church service composed by holy martyrs and worthy instruments of reformation, in the conscionable use whereof many Christian hearts have found unspeakable joy and comfort, wherein the

famous Church of England, our dear mother, hath just cause to glory."

So ran the Cheshire petition of 1641, signed by over 7000 inhabitants of the county. Now every copy of that time-honoured manual was to be given up to be burned, and the use of it made penal. The King's arms in the church are pulled down; an hour-glass is purchased for the preacher, and beautified with gilding, for preaching takes precedence of the ordinance of Common Prayer, and kneeling places for worshippers are succeeded by seats for those who come to hear.[1]

We find notices of the visit of the Commissioners appointed under the Act for providing maintenance of preaching ministers and other pious uses; the commission for Lancashire was issued March 29, 1650, and sixteen inquisitions were held: three at Manchester, six at Wigan, three at Lancaster, three at Preston, and one at Blackburn.

[1] In Didsbury Parochial Chapel:

1645. Paid for one pewter basson to baptise children in iij*s.* v*d.*
Paid for the Directorie for Mr. Bradshawe.

In Wilmslow:

Received for the lead of the ffont ... ... iij*s.*
For the organ case, railing, and cover for ould ffont xij*s.*
For a pewter bason ... ... ij*s.* viij*d.*
Iron worke to sett the basson in ... ... v*s.*
For an hour glasse ... ... j*s.*
1650. For the diabolishinge of the Kinges arms according to an order from the Parliament did injoyne it to bee done ... ... ij*s.*

The churchwardens of Goostrey paid 2*s.* for their copy of the Directory in 1645-6, and in 1650 2*s.* for a pewter dish or bason to baptize in.

The Commissioners for Pious Uses visited Knutsford July 29, 1657, and the churchwardens of Wilmslow paid for them and their men in meat and drink, 10*s.* August 27, 1657, "Paid at Knutsford when wee were there the 3rd tyme concerninge the poore, before the Commissioners for Pyous Uses, for our meate and drinke, being in number thirteen persons, 4*s.* 4*d.*" The inquiry went on until January 26, 1657-8, and many entries of expenses in connection occur.

The people were growing speedily tired of the new Church *régime*. It was too stern and sour for their taste. In Cheshire and Lancashire, where boisterous games, ales and wakes, cocking and other sports were so popular, the prohibition of all public meetings on pretence of recreation, as horse-racing, hunting, hawking, cock-fighting, football playing, especially produced a desire for change.

The death of Cromwell in September 1658 was followed in a few months by the Cheshire rising under Sir George Booth. Though it failed at the time through mis-management, the design aimed at was soon after accomplished, and when the Convention Parliament recalled Charles II., and the King came to his own again, in no part of England was the event welcomed with greater gladness than in the diocese of Chester. How joyously would the bells ring in again the old order of things! How ungrudgingly would the churchwardens defray the expense of setting up in the church the Royal Arms which they had been forced to "diabolish"! How welcome were the quiet, tender, devotional services,

the Common Prayer in the church in place of the long political sermons and extemporaneous prayers which they had been compelled to listen to; the reverence in the presence of holy things instead of the disorder, ruin, contempt, profanity, and irreverence which had marked the years of Puritan rule! How significant are the entries in the books of St. Mary's, Chester:

1660. Paid to the Clerke of Pentice for makeinge a warrant to search for ye Communion table ...	6*d.*
Spent on the Constables in goeinge about to search for the table[1] ...	4*d.*
1661. Paid for mendinge the service booke for the Clerke	1*s.* 8*d.*
Paid to the Deane for a prayer-book	1*s.* 4*d.*

Goostrey Church:

1661. For Booke of Common Prayer and Carriage	8*s.* 0*d.*
Booke of Homilies, booke of Articles and Canons	9*s.* 0*d.*
To Mr. Eaton for buying ye Surples	£1 14*s.* 0*d.*

In St. Mary's, Chester, under the same date, the charge is £2 4*s.* 0*d.*

The following copy of a "Sacrament Certificate" is worthy of record here. A very large number of similar certificates is preserved in the Muniment Room of the Chester Corporation.

[1] The Prayer-books had been burnt or destroyed whenever they could be found.

Wee William Thompson Rector and minister of the parish & parish church of St peter in the citty of Chester & citty of the saem city & John Pemberton churchwarden of the said p'ish & p'ish church doe hereby certify that William Morris clark of the said p'ish & p'ish church upon the Lord's day commonly called Sunday the 6th day of this instant July immediatly after Divine service & sermon ther did in the p'ish church aforesaid receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the usage of the Church of England In witness herof wee have hereunto subscribed our hands the tenth day of july in the yeare of our Lord one thousand six hundred seventy & three.

William Thompson Rector & minister of the pis'h & p'ish church of St Peter in CHESTER aforesaid.

John Pemberton Churchwarden of ye said p'ish & p'ish Church.

Samuel Broster of the citty of Chester Gent Owen Shone of the same city Barber Chyrurgeon upon enquirie made by this court doe severally make oath that they doe know William Morris in the above written certificate named & who now present hath delivered the same into this Court & doe further severally make oath that they did see the said William Morris receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at the time day & place in the said certificate in that behalfe expressed and certified and that they did see the certificate above written subscribed by the said William Thompson and John Pemberton And further doe say upon their oath or their oathes that all other matters or things in the said certificate recited mentioned or expressed are true as they verily believe & to the best of their knowledges Samuel Broster Owen Shone

JUR' in CUR' decimo quarto die Julii 1673 anno regni regis CAROLIs'c'di nunc anglie &c. decimo quinto.

CHAPTER XII

The Restoration—Bishop Brian Walton's reception—Bishops Henry Ferne and George Hall—Ejected ministers—Warden Heyrick conforms—Sir Geoffrey Shakerley's raids on Conventicles—Bishop Wilkins, "universally curious"—Incompetent clergy admitted into benefices—"Repetitions"—Nonconforming ministers ordained—Bishop Pearson—Monmouth's rising—Bishop Cartwright.

THE Bishop whom Charles II. nominated to the see of Chester at the Restoration was Brian Walton, the learned editor of the great Polyglot Bible. He was born in Yorkshire in 1600. After holding the rectories of St. Giles-in-the-Fields and Sandon in Essex, as well as a prebend in St. Paul's Cathedral, he was obliged in the troublous times to betake himself to Oxford for refuge. Here he formed the design of his great work, and in 1652 laid his proposals before the Council of State, who, while being "of opinion that the work propounded by him is very honourable and deserving encouragement, find that the matter of his desires is more proper for the consideration of Parliament than the Council." The work, which was in six folio volumes, the first of which appeared in 1654, the second in 1655, the

third in 1656, and the remainder in 1657, was dedicated to Cromwell, but at the Restoration the King's name was substituted.

In March, after his consecration to the see of Chester, he was appointed one of the commissioners at the Savoy Conference. In the autumn he proceeded to Chester, and the enthusiasm with which he was received is some measure of the revulsion of feeling in the country generally at the supersession of Puritanism by Episcopacy. Some of the citizens travelled as far as Lichfield to meet him. Almost all the gentry of the county, as well as the Militia, joined the cavalcade. Five troops of horse met him at Nantwich, and the third day the clergy of the county and city, with the mayor and corporation, welcomed him, amidst the acclamation of the people. He found the palace in great ruin after the war. A portion of it had been used as a prison, and he therefore petitions the King that the prisoners may be removed to the Castle, as the repairs, which cost afterwards upwards of £1000, could not be taken in hand as long as the palace continued to serve for a common gaol.

After a short stay in Chester, the Bishop returned to London, where he fell sick and died on Nov. 29, 1661.

His successor, Henry Ferne, also a Yorkshireman, had likewise a very short tenure of office. Consecrated on February 9, 1662, he died on the 16th of March following. This year saw the Act of Uniformity passed, and it fell to Bishop Ferne's successor, George Hall (1662—1668), son of Bishop Joseph Hall of Norwich,

to carry it out in his extensive and difficult diocese. The history of religious opinion in the two counties during the reigns of Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I., as well as in the interregnum, shows that such an Act would be in no way palatable to ministers whose anti-Church feeling had been so pronounced. Of the 2088 ministers ejected for refusing to comply with this Act, about a hundred resided in Lancashire, and of these thirteen conformed later. Several Nonconformists in Lancashire contrived in one way or another to retain their livings without complying with the requirements of the Act, but this would be where the minister was so popular that no one would lay an information against him. In Cheshire the number of ejected ministers was sixty-two, according to Calamy fifty-two.

There is no reason to suppose that Bishop Hall showed undue severity in enforcing the Act, though Dr. Halley most unjustly insinuates that, "without a particle of his contemplative father's sweetness, he seems to have regarded it as a filial duty to retaliate and avenge the wrongs of his persecuted sire upon all Presbyterians who came under his power." The same writer calls Sunday, September 14, 1662, a sad and humiliating day when Warden Heyricke entered the desk clad in a surplice, and as a conformist read the new service-book according to the requirements of the Act of Uniformity. He who had been the daring leader of the Presbyterians, who had presented the Lancashire remonstrance to Charles I., who had denounced Laud from the pulpit, and roused the people to resist in arms the unconstitutional authority

by which the ceremonies were imposed, who had signed the Solemn League and Covenant and exhorted the people to append their signatures to his own, who had obtained the establishment of Presbyterian discipline throughout Lancashire, "who went to prison rather than submit to the demands of Cromwell—that great preacher stood before his congregation to contradict the professions of his long life, and to renounce the covenant which many of his hearers had subscribed at his instigation."

The Act of Uniformity of 1662 was supplemented in 1664, July 1, by the Conventicle Act, which was occasioned by the rumours of conspiracy and insurrection which were commonly circulated.

The following year, Oct. 31, 1665, the Five Mile Act was passed to "restrain Nonconformists from inhabiting corporations." These Acts were enforced with stern rigour, and the gaols were filled, not only with ministers, but with members of their congregations.

Reports are made of the success obtained in suppressing conventicles. Sir Geoffrey Shakerley, governor of Chester Castle, describes with great glee a raid which he made upon one at Bosley, and later another at Congleton.

"1669, June 5. Sir Geoffrey Shakerley to Williamson. Hearing that one Garside[1]—amongst divers others—that had long fled from authority by shifting from county to county and changing his apparel, was

[1] This John Garside Sir Geoffrey pulled out of the pulpit because he would not read the *Book of Sports*, and then had him conveyed to Chester Castle and imprisoned.

keeping a conventicle at Bosley Chapel, five miles from Chester, I took a friend and one of my own men and went to the place, where I found him in the act of his pretended devotion with about two hundred persons, from whom I received much opposition but more abuse by their foul language. I secured Garside, who confessed that he had never been in orders, and sent him to prison for refusing to give security to answer the law for this unlawful assembly. I hope to see the laws executed upon some more of the ringleaders. Their insolence is grown to that height that some of the chief of the female disciples said openly that the King tolerated their meeting, and that they therefore wondered I disturbed them: it will much lessen his Majesty's authority in his subordinate magistrates if some severe course be not speedily taken to restrain those confident expressions and practices."

A fortnight later he reports—

"Since I took the Conventiclist at Bosley Chapel, I have taken another at Congleton, where were one hundred people assembled, and their chief speaker one Boden, a pitiful, broken butter-merchant, has been committed to prison for refusing to give security to answer his unlawful practices. The way we take to punish these people and prevent their meeting is by committing and binding them over to the next sessions, and proceeding against them by indictment for keeping riotous and unlawful assemblies. There is one Ambrose Price, a notorious and dangerous fellow upon this account, who made his essay both at Bosley and at Congleton, where he resides: and as mayor

and his brethren were very remiss in his apprehension, I shall be forced to issue a warrant, as deputy lieutenant, to some officer of the militia."

This "spirited" action, for which he is highly commended by another correspondent,[1] was not altogether successful, for Sir Geoffrey Shakerley, reporting the assemblage of great numbers of sectarians, notwithstanding all endeavours used to the contrary, asks for instructions how to proceed against them.

On July 5 he dispersed a meeting at the house of Dr. Thomas Harrison, who had been chaplain to Henry Cromwell and the preacher in Chester cathedral. He describes how, breaking open the doors, "some we took hid under beds, others locked up in closets and hid in corners and private places of the house, in all sixty men and women, whom I brought before the mayor."

Quakers now come under notice as giving trouble. They were established in Wilmslow parish as early as 1654, and continued there in considerable numbers nearly to the present day.

1654. Paid unto Mr. Daine [Dean] at the Middlewich for the takeinge of 4 examinacons concerning Quakers ... *vs.*

1656. Distributed by Mr. Brereton parson and the Churchwardens xx*s.* which was forfeited by the Quakers for their Saboth Breaking.

1673. Spent when the Lords Bailifes should

[1] "If his Majesty had as active and vigilant justices in all parts of his dominions, there would be less fear of tumults and rebellions."

have met us concerning the Quakers for the payinge of their Church Lay ... 1*s.* 8*d.*

1675. Spent when we sued the Quakers 1*s.* 6*d.*, for serving the Executive 2*s.* 4*d.*, when we went to straine [distrain] 1*s.* 8*d.*

1676. When we went about the Brief for Northampton and selling the Quakers goods ... ... 2*s.* 0*d.*

As an instance of the annoying conduct of the Quakers at this time, Mr. Burshall states: "1660, June 9. Two Quakers came into my church [Acton] with a lanthorn and candle while I was preaching. Their design was to have lighted a sheet of paper which they had, as a sign of God's anger burning against us."

One hundred and forty-seven were seized for "seditious meetings," and imprisoned in the palace at Chester, Feb. 21, 1660-61. Sixteen Quakers committed at Chedworth, March 19, 1660-61, for refusing to take the Oath of Allegiance, and eight more April 2, but all were released by the King's Proclamation on his Coronation.

Bishop Hall, after an episcopate of six years, spent mainly in attempting to restore order in his distracted diocese, died August 23, 1668, to be succeeded by a man of widely different character, John Wilkins (1668—1672). He came to the diocese with a far greater reputation and more widespread popularity than the learned Bishop Walton. John Evelyn speaks of him as "that most obliging and universally curious

Dr. Wilkins." His "curiousness" consisted in his distinguished mathematical and scientific abilities, which led him naturally to take a foremost part in the foundation of the Royal Society. His "obliging" disposition enabled him to pass satisfactorily to himself through the various changes, political and religious, of the times, and to succeed in being always on good terms with the powers that be. After having served in 1638 as chaplain and tutor in the household of Charles Lewis, elder brother of Prince Rupert, he married in 1656 Cromwell's sister, and by Richard Cromwell was nominated to the Mastership of Trinity College, Cambridge. During the Civil War he sided with the Parliamentarians, and accepted the Presbyterian Covenant. When that was replaced by the "Engagement," he readily subscribed to it, and thereby secured the friendship of the Independent Party. When the wheel turned round, and the King came to his own again, Dr. Wilkins was ready to turn, and able to make his peace with the Royalists. He subscribed to the Act of Uniformity, was appointed successively to a prebend in York, to the Deanery of Ripon, a prebend at St. Paul's, a stall at Exeter Cathedral, and finally in 1668 nominated Bishop of Chester. This versatility of political and religious views was accompanied with great amiability of character, which secured for him the warm friendship of all with whom he was brought into contact.

In the administration of his diocese he was decidedly lenient to the Nonconformists, as his predecessor was uncompromising. He would not disturb the aged Angier, Bishop Bridgman's friend, Vicar of

Denton. Cuthbert Harrison, the Presbyterian minister of Singleton, he allowed to preach in his own house near Kirkham. The same tolerance he showed to the Nonconformists at Dean and Rainford in Prescot parish. At the latter place, Mr. Bradshaw, the ejected minister of Hindley, succeeded in preaching without hindrance, by an unworthy evasion. Having some friends among the conforming clergy, he procured their occasional services, when they read the Book of Common Prayer, which he could not conscientiously read himself. Thus the churchwarden at the Visitations was able to reply in the affirmative to the question, "Have you the Common Prayer read in your chapel?" and though several attempts were made to disturb Mr. Bradshaw, Bishop Wilkins always protected him.

Being pliant himself, he was successful in inducing by his arguments many of the Nonconformists to come in. Thus Colley of Bruera, Richard Edwards of Christleton, Samuel Edgeley of Thornton, are mentioned as having been won over to Conformity. Adam Martindale relates that the Bishop, "observing what a great number of drunken ministers there were in his diocese, and especially near Wigan, was resolved to turn such out or at least suspend them, and to fill their places with better men: and having a good opinion of some of us that he took to be moderate Nonconformists, he proposed terms to us, to which we returned a thankful answer, showing our willingness to comply in anything that would not cross our principles."

Dr. Halley remarks (it is to be feared upon good

grounds) that in the urgency occasioned by so many churches becoming vacant at one time, the ecclesiastical authorities were compelled to admit very incompetent persons into the benefices, rather than leave the parishes entirely destitute of religious ordinances. Uneducated men, some of whom could hardly read the liturgy, irreligious men who had no concern for the spiritual interests of the people, immoral men who were a scandal to their office, often occupied the places which had been worthily filled by learned, holy, and devoted pastors. Some could not preach, some would not preach, some had better not have preached. It is no wonder that in this deficiency of pastoral oversight, some even of those who were favourably disposed to the Church of England should resort for spiritual edification to those earnest men who had refused to conform to the ordinances of that Church.

It was quite in accordance with the above proposal that he should take a leading part in the "Comprehension and Toleration of Dissenters," which he discussed with Baxter and Manton. This scheme of Comprehension was rejected by Parliament, who in 1670 passed instead a new and more stringent Act against conventicles. In Lancashire especially the practice had been growing of itinerant preaching. The ejected ministers would give what were called "repetitions," *i. e.* repeat the outlines of their sermons or the sermons of others to their friends on Wednesday evenings and on Sunday evenings. What were at first domestic exercises grew into public services, social meetings into large gatherings, and an organized Nonconformity was gradually developed.

This became formally established in Lancashire in 1672, after the promulgation of the King's Declaration of Indulgence. In other parts of the country that announcement of the King was not welcomed very heartily. It was suspected that it was made to favour the Roman Catholics, under pretence of tolerating Protestant Dissenters. The heir to the throne was a Papist. Emissaries from Rome were working in many parts of the kingdom, and in no part more actively than in Lancashire. Jesuits and seminary priests appeared in greater numbers than ever since the days of the Spanish Armada.

Some thirty-six Presbyterian ministers and six Independents in Lancashire, after careful consideration, gratefully accepted the Declaration, and took the decided step of formally separating from the Established Church, and according to Dr. Halley "on October 29, 1672, in the house of Mr. Robert Eaton, of Deansgate, in Manchester, was conducted what I have no doubt was the first ordination in England of nonconforming ministers."

The same year, three weeks later, Bishop Wilkins died, universally regretted, especially by the Nonconformists. Newcome speaks of the sad news of the death of the "learned, worthy, pious, and peaceable Bishop of Chester." John Angier laments "the good Bishop Wilkins, a great loss; he died comfortably, and rejoiced in his moderation whilst he was a bishop." Burnet refers to his joining at Cambridge with those who studied to propagate better thoughts, to take men off from being in parties, or from narrow notions, from superstitions, conceits, and fierceness about opinions.

"John Wilkins," observes a recent writer,[1] "was certainly one of the most eminent and interesting prelates who have presided over the see of Chester. Though he cannot be reckoned among the consistent and heroic type of Churchmen, his great scientific attainments, his tolerance in an intolerant age, and his general kindliness, unite to form a character which must ever be regarded with love and admiration."

Bishop Wilkins was succeeded by another eminent divine, distinguished in a different department of literature, the ablest representative among Englishmen of the seventeenth century of systematic theology, John Pearson (1673—1686). It is interesting to observe that the new prelate, although born at Great Snoring in Norfolk, had already a connection with Chester, being a grandson on the mother's side of Bishop Vaughan. Amongst his University exercises he had written some elegiac verses in memory of Edward King, whose death by drowning on the voyage from Chester to Ireland was bemoaned by Milton in his *Lycidas*.

Dr. Pearson came to Chester with a great reputation as a learned theologian. Even in his school-days he began to lay the foundations of that profound knowledge of the Patristic writings which caused him to be pronounced "one of the most learned divines of the nation,"[2] "whose very dross is golden."[3] His famous work, the *Exposition of the Creed*, had been published in 1659. Originally consisting of a

[1] Rev. F. Sanders, in his *Historic Notes of the Bishops of Chester*.

[2] Evelyn. [3] Bentley.

series of parish lectures, it became, with the valuable notes in illustration of the argument, the most perfect (within its limits and scope) and complete treatise on theology which ever came from an English pen.

It was natural that he should be selected to take part in the Savoy Conference, and to form one of a Committee appointed to draw up the service for May 29, the prayer for the High Court of Parliament. He was also one of three engaged in finally revising the additions and amendments to the Book of Common Prayer.

He was also able in 1672 to render valuable aid to the advocates of Episcopacy in the Church of England by his *Vindiciæ Epistolarum S. Ignatii.* It has been described as "one of the best public bulwarks of our Ecclesiastical State, proving against the contention of the Presbyterians that the testimony of this ancient Father to an Episcopacy dating from Apostolic times was undoubtedly authentic."

The following year his high qualifications to be a Father of the Church were tardily recognized by his nomination to the see of Chester, his consecration taking place in Lambeth Chapel, February 9, 1673. His episcopate of thirteen years was uneventful. Dr. Halley, in his *History of Nonconformity*, remarks that "he was too much occupied with his *Exposition of the Creed* [the first edition of which, however, had been published fourteen years before], and other literary works, to do much good or harm in his diocese. Nonconformity, if little the better, was none the worse under his negligent administration." Burnet states

that Bishop Pearson "was not active in his diocese, but too remiss and easy in his Episcopal functions, and was a much better divine than a bishop."

The records of the diocese are too imperfect to give much information about his management of the diocese, but it is certain that he was much hindered by bodily infirmity, for at least eight years before his decease. after a second stroke of paralysis, in 1686, from taking any active part in its administration. The stately monument in Chester Cathedral to the author of the *Exposition of the Creed* is due to the earnest efforts of a former Minor Canon, Rev. E. Dyer Green, who was successful in obtaining subscriptions not only from the members of Oxford and Cambridge Universities, but also from our American cousins.

In 1683 Chester was the scene of a "No Popery" riot, in connection with the visit of the Duke of Monmouth, who had a considerable following in Cheshire, but more especially amongst the Dissenters of Lancashire. The mob which followed him about the city forced their way into the cathedral, destroyed what painted glass there was remaining, broke open the vestry, tore up the surplices and hoods, beat the font in pieces, pulled down the ornaments, and broke the organ.

The Duke is said to have hatched his plot of insurrection at Bidston, and he stood godfather to the infant daughter of the Mayor of Chester, but the churchwardens and parishioners of St. John's, Chester, do not appear to have shared the common enthusiasm for him, and soon after appears the entry in the Churchwardens' Accounts—

Paid ringers the day we received the news that the Duke of Monmouth was defeated ... ... 1*s.* 0*d.*

Paid Christopher Eykin for ringing upon the day of Thanksgiving for the happy victory over the Duke of Monmouth 12*s.* 0*d.*

Wigan shared in this public joy, for "1*s.* was paid to Richard Mort for a dozen of ale that day wich Monmouth was taken, for the ringers."

Just before the nomination of Bishop Pearson to the see of Chester, the Duke of York had declared himself, to the great distress of the nation, a convert to the Church of Rome. On the Bishop's death in July 1686, much anxiety was entertained as to the character and views of the successor whom James, now King, would select. It is curious that his choice should fall upon Thomas Cartwright (1686—1689), the grandson of the notable Puritan who had contended so vigorously with Whitgift in Elizabeth's reign: as a boy brought up at Northampton under the strongest Puritan influences, and as an undergraduate at Oxford entered at a college the principal of which was one of the leading Puritans of the University. All this did not prevent Cartwright from becoming an ardent Royalist at the Restoration, and no clergyman preached more assiduously the doctrine of absolutism. "The King hath indeed," were his words when preaching at Ripon in 1686, "promised to govern by law, but the safety of the people (of which he is the judge) is an exception implied in every monarchical promise."

When he was nominated, not long after this expression of opinion, to the see of Chester, several of the bishops urged Sancroft to delay his consecration. After he had taken possession of the bishopric, he continued to uphold the doctrine of the absolute authority of the Crown, and from his subservience to the King's wishes, without being a Papist, he was regarded as a most dangerous enemy to the Church of England. In his diary occur several entries which show how watchful he was on the subject of the King's supremacy. A Mr. Moncy, 1687, preached "in the cathedral, and I admonished him to mend his prayer, in which he gave not the King his titles, and to be wary of reflecting so imprudently as he did upon the King's religion."

Mr. Peake, Vicar of Bowdon, ventured to preach a sermon in the cathedral on the duty of governors before Lord Clarendon and Lord Derby, instead of a Lenten sermon. It was "an indiscretion" which the Bishop could with difficulty forgive, despite the earnest intercession of Lord Derby and Mr. Thomas Cholmondeley.

King James found in him a most strenuous ally on his behalf, not only in the dispute with the Fellows of Magdalen College, but also in obtaining addresses of thanks for his "Declaration of Liberty of Conscience." The town of Wigan voted such an address, but generally throughout his diocese he met with little success. He was regarded with so much suspicion in consequence of his supposed share in advising the King to publish this Declaration, that in his presence discussion on these matters was avoided, "nobody

caring to talk before him." Only thirty of his clergy in his vast diocese could be induced to comply with the King's command, nor were the parishioners of Wigan (any more than the curate-in-charge of Barking) in accord with the views of their episcopal Rector, for 10*s.* was paid to the ringers "that day newse came the [seven] bishops were freed."

Cartwright's diary shows that he was on friendly terms with the leading families of the county, that he enjoyed good feeding, and was himself much given to hospitality. But unscrupulous and unprincipled as he was, it must be acknowledged that he was active enough in his diocesan work, and was particular in requiring decency and order in the conduct of the services of the Church.

"1687, Jan. 29. I admonished Mr. Otway, the precentor in the church, of his neglecting services and anthems, and his teaching of the quire: and he refusing to amend and be the packhorse, as he called it, to the quire and choristers, I told him I should take care to provide a better in his room, and one that should attend God's service better.

"Feb. 15. I rebuked, as they deserved, Mrs. Brown (and three other ladies) for talking and laughing in the church, and they accused Mr. Fullerton for being as guilty as themselves."

Jan. 26. He notices with apparent disapproval that "no prayers had been said in Euxton chapel for twenty years last past."

He was honoured by King James with a visit, August 27, 1687, when the King heard Mass in Chester Castle Chapel. On the 28th, the King touched for the

King's Evil 350 persons in the choir of the cathedral, and again on the day of his departure he "healed" 450 persons in the choir.

When James fled to France in December 1688, Cartwright, knowing his great unpopularity, found it necessary shortly after to make his secret way to St. Germains, to join the master whose designs and wishes he had so servilely carried out. He accompanied James to Ireland in 1689, went with him to Dublin in March, and on Easter Day was present at the services in Christ Church Cathedral. He died of dysentery at Dublin, April 15, 1689.[1]

[1] The following extracts from Churchwardens' Accounts are of interest, as showing the concern naturally shown in the country parishes in this important crisis of the national life.

WILMSLOW:

1688.	Spent on the Ringers and others that day that my Lord Delamere returned with his souldiers, the first time he had been with the Prince of Orange	4*s.* 6*d.*
	Paid to the man that brought the Declaration of the Liberty of Conscience	8*d.*
	Paid to the same man that brought orders to put King William and Quine [*sic*] Mary's names into the Common Prayer Book	8*d.*
	Paid to the Ringers upon the Coronation [an unusually large sum]	12*s.* 4*d.*
	Spent, when we had the news that King James was removed, on the Ringers for ringing ...	4*s.* 8*d.*

PRESTBURY:

1685.	Pd. to the Ringers upon the takinge of the late Duke of Monmouth	12*s.*
	Pd. to the Ringers upon the day appointed for a thanksgiveinge to Almighty God for defeateing of the late Duke of Monmouth ...	£1 0 0

1688. Pd. for K. James Declaration w^ch^ was Ordered to be Reade in the Church		8*d.*
Pd. unto and spent upon the Ringers upon the newes of Proclayming King William and Queene Mary, King and Queene of England ...	7	0
To Ringers upon Coronation Day	12	0
For their meat and drinke	8	0
For ourselves and for 2 dozen of ale w^ch^ wee sent to the people at the Bonefyre	7	6

CHAPTER XIII

The Revolution—Reforms of Bishop Stratford—Society for Reformation of Manners—Sir William Dawes—Bishop Gastrell's *Notitia Cestrensis*—Bishop Peploe—Bishop Keene builds a new Palace—Bishops Markham and Porteus—Sunday Schools and Observances of Sunday—The Shakers—Bishops Cleaver, Majendie, and Sparke—Bishop Law—Augmentation of Livings—Restoration of Chester Cathedral—Foundation of St. Bees—Bishop Blomfield—State of Diocese.

THE accession of William and Mary brought about a great change in the administration of the diocese. King James had intended to show another marked favour to Cartwright by translating him to Salisbury, and Dean Arderne, who made such an "excellent speech," conceived in the spirit characteristic of his Bishop, was selected to succeed him. This intention was frustrated by King James's flight, and for some months after Cartwright's death the diocese remained without a chief pastor. After being refused by John Scott, the author of *The Christian Life*, the bishopric was accepted by Nicholas Stratford (1689—1707).

A native of Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, he was appointed in 1667, by the influence of Archbishop Dolben, with whom he was connected in marriage, to the Wardenship of the Collegiate Church

of Manchester, which he held until 1684. During these seventeen years he had striven to carry out his duties with earnestness and consideration. Succeeding Herrick, who, though he outwardly conformed, took little or no pains to restore the ancient comely order of the Church service, Stratford had much to reform. The communicants had been accustomed to receive the elements in the choir, and not kneeling before the altar. He induced the parishioners to observe the rule that "all communicants should come up to the rails to receive the Holy Sacrament." The surplice, which had been disused during Herrick's Wardenship, was to be worn by the chaplains at all services, at churchings, christenings, weddings, and burials, which should be in and about the church. The music and chanting was improved. He enjoined upon the incumbents of the parish of Manchester to take care of their registers, and attend to the rubrics in the Prayer-book, then so greatly disregarded.

He was, despite this enforcement of order, very popular with the members of the Chapter and other neighbouring clergy. But Manchester, formerly a hotbed of Puritanism, had become a stronghold of the supporters of Stuart absolutism. Stratford's gentle and considerate treatment of Dissenters offended these zealots; and his attitude and feeling about Judge Jeffreys' proceedings excited such hostility that he determined to resign the Wardenship in 1684.

On his appointment to the Bishopric of Chester, he reports to the Archbishop of York "that for thirteen years last past [since Bishop Pearson's second visitation, 1677] no visitation has been made by any

bishop of this diocese; that by reason of this long neglect many things are scandalously amisse, and very much need correction: yt I have endeavoured to gett ye best information of what is amisse, and if yr Grace permit me to visit, I shall by God's assistance endeavour to ye utmost of my power to reform and correct all disorders." This promise he faithfully carried out, working away quietly and unostentatiously. He resided constantly in his diocese, but mixing very little in the general life of the Church outside. He repaired the cathedral, and took a creditable part in the Roman controversy, upon which he published several pamphlets. It is said that he was "especially tender to his clergy, whom he loved and treated as brethren, and never rebuked but in a spirit of meekness." Dr. Halley describes him as "a High Churchman, but a very good and charitable Christian. Although very strict and careful in enforcing the most exact and scrupulous observance of all the forms of the Established Church, he was gentle and forbearing with conscientious Nonconformists. Of a spirit averse to persecution, he laboured to satisfy their scruples, and to conciliate them by a meek and courteous, though firm, defence of the legally-appointed ritual and services. Strong in Church principles, he adhered faithfully to the great doctrines of the Reformation, and was more determinately opposed to Papists than to Puritans."

A marked feature of his episcopate was the attention he paid to the formation of the societies for the "Reformation of Manners," the first of which was started by him at Chester. A monthly lecture was

established at the cathedral in connection with this society, the first lecture being preached by the Bishop.

He founded, in 1700, the Blue Coat Hospital in Chester, for the maintenance and instruction of poor lads, on the model of the Chetham Hospital in Manchester.

The episcopate of Bishop Stratford's successor, Sir William Dawes (1708—1714), does not call for much notice. Born in Essex in 1671, he was appointed to the see at the unusually early age of thirty-seven. Throughout his career, important office had been conferred upon him when much younger than any of his predecessors. He was nominated to the Mastership of St. Catherine's, Cambridge, when only twenty-five, under the age for taking the necessary degree of D.D., in the usual course. This difficulty was removed by royal mandate conferring the degree. A year later he became Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge. In 1708, Queen Anne, to the great annoyance of her Whig ministers, appointed him to the bishopric of Chester, allowing him to hold *in commendam* his Mastership of St. Catherine's. "Without being a man of transcendent ability, he was universally spoken of in terms of the highest esteem." He was a staunch Tory, celebrated for his preaching, which was always plain and unaffected, without any pretence of learning, advocating in uncompromising terms the divine right of kings.

On his translation to York in 1714, Queen Anne nominated to Chester one of the most excellent bishops who ever presided over that see, Francis Gastrell (1714—1725). Like some others of his

predecessors, he came to the diocese with a considerable reputation as an able writer and preacher. He proved also to be an active and zealous bishop, ministering discipline firmly but always reasonably, and careful to an unusual degree in the selection of clergy for the larger parishes in his diocese. Many of the livings were very poor. He gave large sums towards their augmentation, and was, especially, charitable in his care for the destitute families of several poor clergymen. His great work, *Notitia Cestrensis*, a record of each parish in the diocese of Chester, has been justly pronounced to be the noblest document extant on the subject of the ecclesiastical antiquities of the diocese. He was also instrumental in securing the valuable collection of the Randle Holmes' MSS. for the British Museum, which were purchased at the Bishop's instigation by his friend the Earl of Oxford, and now form a part of the Harleian collection.

Bishop Gastrell's successor, Samuel Peploe (1726—1752), was a man of very different stamp, directly opposite to him in views, a consistent supporter of Whig principles. He was a latitudinarian in his creed, and an outspoken champion of the principles which placed the House of Hanover on the throne. He owed his advancement to an incident which illustrates his firmness of character. When Preston was occupied in 1715 by the Jacobite troops, some of them entered the parish church whilst Peploe was reading morning prayers. A soldier, sword in hand, required him to substitute *James* for *George* in the Prayer for the King. Peploe continued reading prayers, only pausing to say, "Soldier, I am doing my duty, do you do yours."

He was obliged to give up his place at the prayer-desk to the chaplain of the Jacobites. This act of loyalty brought about his promotion. Three years after (1718), he was appointed to the Wardenship of the Collegiate Church of Manchester. A difficulty arose about his degree, which was required to be that of Bachelor of Divinity, and, as he refused to proceed at his University, he obtained the degree at Lambeth. Bishop Gastrell contested the legality of this degree, and the dispute was only ended by a decree of the Court of King's Bench establishing the legatine power of the Archbishop of Canterbury. During Peploe's Wardenship, political feeling ran high, and expressed itself by a difference in dress. "Ladies in plaid petticoats and gentlemen in plaid waistcoats, representing Stuart preferences, frequented the Collegiate Church, except when the Warden preached; while other ladies with orange ribands, and other gentlemen with orange handkerchiefs, worshipped in St. Anne's Church, or in the Cross Street Meeting-House. In the Collegiate Church, when the prayer for King George was mumbled over, the people rose from their knees; in St. Anne's that prayer was repeated with especial emphasis and fervour. Such was the religious life of Manchester in the early part of the last century."

Peploe as Warden was continually at variance with his Chapter. As Bishop he was much more successful, though his strong will and warm temper brought him at times into collision with them unnecessarily. "He will always be regarded as a strong and unflinching man in politics, and a feeble and incompetent prelate,

advocating opinions and seeking to inculcate principles totally incompatible with the ritual and dogma of the Church which he was pledged to support." With this it should be remembered that during the twenty-seven years of his episcopate he built, rebuilt, or consecrated no less than thirty-nine churches. Bishop Peploe died at Chester in 1752.

His successor, Dr. Edmund Keene (1752—1771), is noteworthy in connection with the diocese only for the passion for building, which marked still more his tenure of the see of Ely. He built, at a cost of £2000, a new episcopal palace, which has now been displaced by the King's School.

Bishop Markham, who succeeded in 1771, having held successively the Head-mastership of Westminster School, the Deanery of Rochester, and of Christ Church, Oxford, as well as a prebend at Durham, was too heavily weighted to do justice to his episcopal duties, for he continued to hold the Deanery of Christ Church with his bishopric, and to these heavy charges was added the tuition of the Prince of Wales and the future Duke of York. His promotion to the Archiepiscopal see of York in 1777 was in reward for the satisfaction he had given as preceptor of the royal princes.

The advancement of Bishop Markham's successor, Beilby Porteus (1777—1787), has been ascribed in the first instance, but with insufficient ground, to a flattering epitaph which Porteus wrote on George II. Horace Walpole attributes his selection for the see of Chester to an able sermon on the Fast. His University distinctions, remarkable industry, and

high character, are sufficient to explain how he won favour at Court. The letter which he published, when Rector of Lambeth, on the general neglect of Good Friday, produced a very marked impression in London, and brought about a distinct improvement in the observance of the day. On taking up his work in Chester he took up very warmly the question of Sunday-schools, and the more religious observance of Sunday, which was threatened by the rapid growth of debating societies and promenades and concerts on Sundays.

The agitation for the abolition of negro slavery, and the mitigation of the horrors of the Middle Passage, as well as the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, found in Bishop Porteus an ardent and influential supporter. In 1783 he was selected to preach before the S.P.G. the annual sermon, his subject being "The Civilization and Conversion of the Negroes in the British West India Islands."

He was, meanwhile, not neglectful of the interests of his own clergy, establishing an annual subscription for the relief of the poorer incumbents, whilst Dissenters, of whom he had a considerable proportion in his diocese, had to thank him for the earnest support he gave to the Bill for the further relief of Protestant Dissenters as regards subscription. He is classed by Mr. Abbey amongst the evangelical party, though Canon Overton states that though he did not share many of the prejudices which many of his brother prelates conceived against the Evangelical clergy, and was on terms of closest intimacy with many of them, he can hardly be reckoned among their number. Hannah

More speaks of his life as "a tissue of good actions. His industry is incredible, the end of one useful employment is only the beginning of another. His mind is always alive when any project of public good or private benevolence is on foot."

The Constables' Accounts of Manchester contain several references to the Shakers, a body of religious fanatics, led by John Lees and his daughter Anne Lees, which came into notoriety at this time (1772-73), by the eccentricity of their behaviour.

1771, July 14. To apprehending 5 Shakers on Sunday last, 24 persons *6d.* each for Assistants ... ... *12s. 0d.*

To John Moss for expences on this and other such like sundry fines ... *6s. 8d.*

1772, Oct. 19. To repairs making good the breaches at Lees' in Toadlane in order to apprehend a gang of Shakers lockt up there ... ... *5s. 2d.*

May 30. To Anne Lees a Shaker apprehended for disturbing the Congregation in the Old Church detaining her in the Prison room two days *2s.*, maintaining her with meat and drink and her attendant *2s. 3d.*, wages *2s.* ... ... *6s. 3d.*

On the translation of Bishop Porteus to London in 1788, Chester received one of the "Greek Play Bishops," William Cleaver (1788—1800). During his short episcopate he only paid occasional visits to his diocese, residing chiefly in Oxford. It is, however,

noticed that he encouraged among his clergy by the erection of parsonage-houses that residence of which he did not set the example, and that he showed much benevolence, and was discriminating in the distribution of patronage. In 1800 he was translated to the see of Bangor, being succeeded by Henry William Majendie (1800-9), and Bowyer Edward Sparke (1809—1812).

George Henry Law (1812—1824), appointed by the Prince Regent to succeed Bishop Sparke on his translation to Ely, is the first instance of a north-countryman occupying the episcopal seat at Chester. The new bishop was descended from a family of Westmoreland "statesmen," and belonged to a family distinguished for brilliant successes at Cambridge University, two brothers, as well as the future bishop himself, obtaining the place of Second or Third Wrangler, and the Senior Chancellor's medal. During the twelve years of his episcopate he personally visited every parish in his extensive diocese (which would include his own birthplace), and specially devoted his energies to carry out the scheme inaugurated by Bishop Porteus, augmenting the value of small livings and improving the parsonage-houses and churches. He turned his attention also to the restoration of the cathedral, which from long neglect had fallen into great decay. The work, by no means satisfactory in result from an architectural or antiquarian point of view, was carried out in a solid and substantial manner under the direction of Mr. Harrison. He also did much for the spiritual building of his charge, by founding in 1817 St. Bees, the oldest

of the theological colleges, for the education and training of candidates for Holy Orders.

He was succeeded by another "Greek Play Bishop," Charles James Blomfield (1824—1828), one of the most distinguished and energetic prelates who have filled the see of Chester. The activity, tact, and judgment which marked his administration fully justified his selection for the office of a bishop. The state of the diocese when he took charge of it is fully set forth in his first Charge, delivered in 1825. He speaks of the poverty of benefices and the consequent non-residence of incumbents, neglect of churches and glebe-houses, and destitution of clerical families; the indifferent character and inadequate salaries of curates; infrequency in the celebration and irregularity in the performance of the sacred offices of the Church; the incapacity and negligence of churchwardens; the intrusive zeal of some of the more active clergy, and the prevalence of unclerical dress, pursuits, and amusements among others; the use of sham titles, and untrue or careless testimonials to candidates for orders; the short stay of bishops in the see owing to its inadequate endowment, and lastly, as the natural consequence of all the rest, the general obloquy now heaped upon the Church, which was the more stinging because it was in part deserved, and which made every faithful one among her sons feel as though with one hand he must hold the sword, while with the other he repaired the breaches of the sanctuary.

These evils were the consequences of many years' neglect. The Bishop's difficulties were increased by the rapidly-growing population of the diocese, the

great difference of character in the people, and their occupations in the various districts.

He set to work at once to raise the standard of examination for Holy Orders; made careful inquiries into the "title" given and the amount of stipend paid. He was not slow in expressing his disapproval of the employment of clergymen in secular occupations which would interfere with their sacred duties, and fox-hunting parsons, then somewhat common in Cheshire, were especially discountenanced. He himself relates how, asking a poor man in the Lake District whether the clergyman ever visited him, the answer was, "Yes, frequently"; but it turned out that the reason of the pastor's frequent visits lay in the fact that there were a good many foxes in the hills behind the house.[1] Bishop Blomfield lived himself in an atmosphere of work, and few of those around him could long escape the contagion of his example, though some were too ready to term him tyrannical, meddlesome, of puritanical austerity.

On his translation to London in 1828, the addresses of his clergy indicate sufficiently how highly they esteemed his earnest efforts for order and decency. "You have raised the scale of ministerial qualifications, and quickened the zeal of ministerial services. That which you have required from us, you have yourself performed; you have gone before us in the path of every duty." Well might his suc-

[1] As an instance of this mixture of secular pursuits with the clerical profession, it may be mentioned that one clergyman was postmaster in a large town, another was engaged in an extensive agency, a third was, or hoped to become, Mayor of Macclesfield.

cessor, Dr. Sumner (1828—1848), remark, "I feel myself happy in succeeding to a road so admirably smoothed and prepared."

As a speaker and debater he had a high reputation for eloquence, and took part in several important debates on the question of Roman Catholic Emancipation, and the relief of Dissenters. He supported the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, and was favourable to other proposals which tended to remove irksome obligations on Nonconformists.

CHAPTER XIV

Bishop Sumner — Subdivision of the diocese — Bishopric of Manchester—James Prince Lee, first Bishop of Manchester —Bishops James Fraser and James Moorhouse—John Graham—William Jacobson—Foundation of Liverpool See —John Charles Ryle, first Bishop—Bishops Stubbs and Jayne—Sunday Schools.

Bishop Sumner's administration of the diocese during the long period of twenty-one years (1828—1848) was eminently successful, and for the most part uneventful. Whilst he strove firmly and consistently to carry on the plan of reform so ably inaugurated by his predecessor, Bishop Blomfield, his conciliatory manners and strict justice won for him the dutiful respect and willing obedience of his clergy, and checked any tendency to hostility on the part of the Nonconformists. But one most important event specially distinguished this period. The remarkable growth of population and extension of industrial pursuits in the northern portion of the enormous and unwieldy diocese of Chester called for immediate rectification of diocesan arrangements. The Third Report of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1836 dwelt with emphasis on this need, and under the provisions of the Act 6 and 7 William IV.

c. 79, the first step was taken in relief in 1836, when the diocese of Ripon was constituted, and all its picturesque and extensive Yorkshire territory severed from the diocese of Chester. Under the same Act, and in furtherance of an Order in Council made August 1847, the whole of Westmoreland, consisting of the deaneries of Kendal and Kirkby Lonsdale, was assigned to the see of Carlisle, together with the deanery of Copeland in Cumberland, and that part of Lancashire which lies to the north of Morecambe Bay, viz. the deaneries of Furness and Cartmell. This rectification took effect on the death, in 1856, of Dr. Percy, Bishop of Carlisle.

Earlier than this, under the same Act, in 1847, the diocese of Manchester was formed, all the remainder of Lancashire to the north of the Ribble being assigned to Manchester. The endowment of the new see gave rise to a bitter controversy. The above-mentioned Act of 6 and 7 William IV. provided that the two sees of St. Asaph and Bangor should be united on the first vacancy, and that the income of the see suppressed should be appropriated to the endowment of the new see of Manchester, just as the sees of Gloucester and Bristol had been united for the benefit of Ripon. This scheme was regarded by the clergy concerned as cruelly impolitic and unjust, and was opposed by them in frequent remonstrances and petitions. Their protest was warmly supported by the late Earl of Powis, who succeeded in carrying a bill in the House of Lords for the preservation of the two sees intact—a result which, in the light of the recent attacks on the Church

in Wales, must be regarded as most fortunate in the interests of the Church at large.

The first bishop of Manchester was James Prince Lee (1848—1869). After a brilliant career at Cambridge University, where he was accounted one of the most distinguished classical scholars, he was appointed Head-Master of the King's School, Birmingham, where he had amongst his pupils no less than three eminent prelates (Archbishop Benson, Bishop Lightfoot of Durham, and Bishop Westcott). He was consecrated in Whitehall Chapel, January 23, 1848. His appointment was not altogether popular in the new diocese, and many of the clergy received him with ill-concealed distrust and covert opposition. The qualities which won for him success at Birmingham were not altogether appreciated in Manchester. He introduced many admirable improvements in the organization of the diocese, as was testified by his successor, Bishop Fraser,[1] and as at Birmingham, he took the warmest interest in the education movement. But he was apt to confine himself to his formal duties, and the Lancashire clergy, who had found in Bishop Sumner a gentle, conciliatory ruler, resented the somewhat autocratic methods of their new diocesan. At the same time it must be acknowledged that Bishop Prince Lee repeatedly showed great

[1] "We owe to Bishop Lee our organization ; in which respect I venture to think we are not surpassed by any diocese in the land. . . . The framework of the diocese, in all its essential completeness at the present hour, was planned and compacted by the first occupant of the see. I have not found it necessary to vary one of the lines upon which that organization was laid down."—Bishop Fraser's Charge, 1880, pp. 4, 5.

kindness and consideration to the younger and poorer clergy. He was especially active in Church extension: his first Church he consecrated on the day of his enthronement, and his one hundred and thirtieth on the Saturday before he died.

From the formation of the Diocese in 1848 to December 21, 1869, Bishop Lee consecrated 110 new churches, the cost of erection, exclusive of endowments and cost of sites, being £451,344. In many cases the addition of tower or other enlargement has greatly increased this outlay. Twenty new churches were built and consecrated in lieu of former churches at a cost of £90,825. During the same period 163 new district parishes and ecclesiastical districts were formed.

His successor, James Fraser (1869—1885), was remarkable for his geniality and capacity for making and keeping friends. His excellent work in connection with the Royal Commission on Education in 1858, and other similar work in 1856-7 and 1870, brought him prominently into notice, and appeared to qualify him in a special degree for the oversight of this most difficult diocese, where the education question was a burning subject, and the attitude of Nonconformists in great measure hostile. The work of Church extension was carried on by him with unflagging zeal. During his episcopate 105 new churches, containing 60,340 sittings, built at a cost of £730,079, were consecrated, twenty-one new churches in lieu of former churches at a cost of £227,200, 117 new district parishes and ecclesiastical districts formed, and the whole fabric of diocesan

machinery—conferences, Board of Education, Building Society—created and brought into perfect working order. Bishop Fraser threw himself into every social movement of the day, addressing meetings several times a day, and losing no opportunity of meeting working men, whether at their mills, or in the evening gatherings at mechanics' institutes. It was said of him, "omnipresence was his forte, and omniscience his foible." He said rash things, and laid himself open to frequent attack, but the criticism of him was mostly of a friendly and appreciative nature, and his absolute frankness and fearlessness of speech won the hearts of his people.

He was involved (1878—1882), much to his distress, in the painful dispute about ritual known as the Miles Platting case, in connection with which the vicar of Miles Platting, Rev. S. F. Green, was consigned in 1881 to Lancaster Gaol for contempt of court. Another important case, which caused him even more pain and perplexity, was that of the appointment of Mr. Gunton to the rectory of St. John's, Cheetham Hill, Mr. Gunton having published unsound views on the Humanity of Christ.

Bishop Fraser, in his Charge of 1872, gratefully acknowledges the noble part played by individual Churchmen in these great efforts of church building. "Families in Manchester, whose names have passed into a proverb for public spirit and a wisely-directed liberality—the Birleys, the Heywoods, the Gladstones —have taken whole districts under their fostering care, and furnished them with churches, schools, parsonage-houses, and all the *matériel* (so to call it) of

a Christian civilization. Nor should I omit from this catalogue the great landowners, who, like the Earl of Wilton and Lord Egerton of Tatton, never refuse to help forward any good cause of this kind which can establish upon them a legitimate claim" (p. 78).

It should be here added, that the diocese of Manchester, which was first divided into two archdeaconries, Manchester and Lancaster, now consists of three, the archdeaconry of Blackburn being formed in 1877 out of the archdeaconry of Manchester, and consisting mainly of the deaneries of Blackburn and Leyland.

Bishop Fraser's death came suddenly, while he was meditating the resignation of the see. The respect shown at his funeral by various religious bodies outside the Church of England was most noteworthy, and justified the title which he had obtained of "Bishop of all Denominations." A Churchman remarked at his death, "I am quite sure he has knit together the various bodies of Christians in Lancashire in a way which will never be entirely lost."

James Moorhouse, who was appointed bishop in 1885, brought to bear most successfully upon the intricate problems of life in the greatest industrial community in England the practical experience which he had gained in the administration of a populous London parish, combined with the freshness of treatment called for in the colonial diocese of Melbourne, and the Bishop's abundant resource and unwearied activity are much appreciated by the busy Manchester merchants.

In the eight years between 1886 and 1894 Bishop Moorhouse has consecrated 42 new churches, with accommodation for 16,876, at a cost of £40,461.

The great increase in the population of the diocese of Manchester, and the remarkable efforts made in Church extension during the episcopates of Bishops Lee, Fraser, and Moorhouse, to cope with this increase, will be best shown by the following particulars. In 1821 the population was 737,340, which had risen in 1851 to 1,405,919, and nearly doubled itself again in 1891, the census being 2,644,822. The number of churches at the same periods was 184 in 1821, 322 in 1851, and 518 in 1891. The chief increase was in Manchester deanery, where for a population of 459,621 in 1821 there were 81 churches; for 981,084 souls in 1851 there were provided 158 churches, and in 1891, 294 churches for 1,809,232. There was a similarly rapid increase in the Blackburn deanery. In 1821, 28 churches for 138,114 souls; in 1851, 56 churches for 219,115; and in 1891, 93 churches for 504,481 souls.

Meanwhile the diocese of Chester, now reduced to more manageable compass, was being administered by John Graham (1848—1865) and William Jacobson (1865—1884). Bishop Graham (who had obtained at Cambridge high distinction as a classical scholar and mathematician) was Master of Christ College, and Chaplain to the Prince Consort, acting as chairman of his committee when the Prince Consort was a candidate for the Chancellorship. As Bishop, his leading idea was to preserve peace in his diocese, and though on occasion he could be properly firm, his

courtly grace and conciliatory manner, while it won over the Nonconformists, gave offence to the High Church party in the diocese.

The Nonconformists were likely to continue to be treated with consideration and favour by Bishop Graham's successor, who in his earlier years had been associated with them in an especial degree. Bishop Jacobson's education from the first had been conducted under the auspices of the Nonconformists. At the age of nine sent to a school at Norwich kept by a Baptist, thence to Homerton College, he was subsequently, as an undergraduate at St. Edmund's Hall, befriended by Mr. Dawson Turner, a Quaker. In due course he became, in 1848, Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, a post which he held until his appointment to the see of Chester, June 23, 1865. A High Churchman of the old school, he passed through the crisis of the Oxford Movement without taking any prominent action in it. Always extremely reserved and cautious in expressing decided opinions, Bishop Jacobson administered his diocese with tact and judgment, gaining the universal respect of his clergy for his unfailing justice. But despite this caution and reserve, he was not altogether able to avoid giving offence. "Although he had personally no liking for new or extreme ritual, he made it clearly understood that he would discountenance prosecutions, and that he viewed with displeasure laxity and defect in order. His call to conformity offended the Low Church party, and in the earlier years of his episcopate he was twice mobbed by Orangemen in Liverpool on his way to consecrate churches intended for the performance

of an ornate service." He did not long survive his resignation, which took place in 1884.

One special feature which marked his episcopate was the formation of the diocese of Liverpool, a scheme which he warmly supported. The need for this further subdivision of the old diocese was every year becoming one of pressing urgency. The growth of population in Liverpool and its neighbourhood was enormous, as may be gathered from a comparison of the number of churches 200 years ago in the area now included in the diocese of Liverpool with the number at the present time. Where in 1650 there were 37 churches, and in 1850, 122; there are in 1895, 205 benefices, and new churches are yearly being consecrated. The scheme for a separate bishopric for Liverpool was, after lengthened discussion, made possible by the passing of Sir Richard Cross's bill in 1878, and carried to a successful issue, mainly by the great energy, sagacity, and patience of Mr. J. Torr, the member for Liverpool; and in 1880 John Charles Ryle, Vicar of Stradbroke, was appointed the first bishop over the part of Lancashire between the Ribble and the Mersey, the same tract, *inter Ripam et Mersham*, which was held in the time of Domesday by the Norman grantee, Roger of Poictou, and which came by purchase, in 1230, into the possession of Randle Blundeville, the great Earl of Chester.

A second important event during Bishop Jacobson's tenure of the see was the restoration of Chester Cathedral. Much had been done by Dean Anson to the interior. In 1868 the work was put into the

hands of Sir Gilbert Scott, and carried out at a cost of over £100,000. This immense sum was raised mainly by the untiring exertions of Dean Howson, generously aided by Canon Blomfield, and the munificence of the Duke of Westminster and others.

In 1884 William Stubbs, Canon of St. Paul's, and Regius Professor of Modern History, was drawn from his learned retirement to undertake the more exacting duties of a bishop. Though his occupancy of the see was short (1884-9), Bishop Stubbs was able before his translation to Oxford to inaugurate several important measures, notably, a much-needed Pension Fund for Cheshire clergy, and a scheme for erecting a number of new churches in the rapidly-growing district of Stockport. He was succeeded by Francis John Jayne (1889—), who brought with him into his diocesan work the same vigour of administration, many-sided activity, practical common-sense, and geniality of character which marked his career as a tutor at Oxford, as Principal at St. David's College, Lampeter, and as vicar of the great parish of Leeds. Whilst the various organizations in the diocese have been maintained in good working order, and stimulated by words of hearty encouragement and wise counsel, Bishop Jayne has taken from the first a very prominent part in the discussion of questions relating to Elementary Education, Social Life, and Church Defence, and the name of the Bishop of Chester will henceforward be inseparably associated with the enterprising scheme of Temperance Reform which he has been most indefatigable in bringing before the country at large.

As a last word, it is interesting to note the marvellous change which has been brought on the face of the north-western counties of England ecclesiastically since the Visitation of Bishop Cotes in 1554, as recorded in page 120. Then the total number of benefices throughout the district under review (which included large portions of seven counties) was 211. To-day, after repeated subdivisions, the diocese of Chester alone has 265 benefices, with 408 parochial clergy. Without counting the incumbencies in the districts assigned to Ripon and Carlisle, there are at the present day in the three dioceses (Manchester, Liverpool, and Chester) which represent the original diocese of 1554, no less than 1758 parochial clergy. This provision for public worship represents most imperfectly the great progress made in caring for the spiritual edification of the people of the north-western counties. Much might have been said about the establishment of Sunday Schools, which are a marked feature in the religious life of Manchester[1] especially and Lancashire generally; of the foundation of St. Aidan's College, the work of the various charitable organizations, the education boards, the colleges at

[1] Sunday Schools were started in Manchester as early as 1784, only three years later than the year in which Mr. Raikes of Gloucester inaugurated the movement. A sermon of 1785 speaks of "the singular and extraordinary success" of the movement. "The improvement of the children in learning has been wonderful, and in religious knowledge still more surprising." "The number of applications which have been received by the Society at Manchester for a specimen of our plan from many parts of the kingdom, and some quarters of Wales, prove that this grain of mustard seed is growing into a tree whose branches may spread around for the healing of the nations."

Chester and Warrington for the training of teachers in elementary schools.

The Church has indeed been zealous, in successive generations, to "enlarge the place of her tent, and stretch forth the curtains of her habitations" in places once wild and dreary wastes or morasses, now occupied with a teeming population. Yet the command is still, "Spare not, lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes"; "There remaineth yet much land to be possessed."

BISHOPS OF CHESTER.

(SEE FOUNDED 1541.)

	DATE.		
1.	1541	John Bird, D.D., Oxon. ...	Deprived by Queen Mary 1554. Buried at Great Dunmow, Essex, 1558
2.	1554	George Cotes, D.D., Oxon. ...	Died at Chester, 1555
3.	1556	Cuthbert Scott, D.D., Camb.	Deprived and died at Louvain, 1565
4.	1561	William Downham, D.D., Oxon.	Died in Nov. 1577. Buried in Chester Cathedral
5.	1579	William Chaderton, D.D., Camb.	Translated to Lincoln
6.	1595	Hugh Billet or Bellot, D.D., Camb.	Buried at Wrexham
7.	1597	Richard Vaughan, D.D., Camb.	Translated to London
8.	1605	George Lloyd, D.D., Camb. ...	Buried in Chester Cathedral
9.	1616	Thomas Morton, D.D., Camb.	Translated to Lichfield and Coventry, 1619
10.	1619	John Bridgman, D.D., Camb.	Held the see until Episcopacy was suspended by the Commonwealth. Died about 1652, and was buried at Kinnersley, Shropshire
11.	1660	Brian Walton, D.D., Camb.	Died in London. Buried in St. Paul's Cathedral, 1661
12.	1661	Henry Ferne, D.D., Camb. ...	Died in London before he took possession of the see
13.	1662	George Hall, D.D., Oxon. ...	Died at Wigan, and was buried in the Parish Church there, 1668
14.	1668	John Wilkins, D.D., F.R.S., Camb.	Died in London, and was buried at St. Lawrence Jewry

15.	1673	John Pearson, D.D., F.R.S., Camb.	Died at Chester. Buried in the Cathedral
16.	1686	Thomas Cartwright, D.D., Oxon.	Died in Ireland, and was buried in Christ Church, Dublin, 1689
17.	1689	Nicholas Stratford, D.D., Oxon.	Died in 1707, and was buried in Chester Cathedral
18.	1708	Sir Wm. Dawes, Bart., D.D., Camb.	Translated to York
19.	1714	Francis Gastrell, D.D., Oxon.	Died 1725. Buried in Christ Church, Oxford
20.	1726	Samuel Peploe, D.D., Oxon.	Died 1752. Buried in Chester Cathedral
21.	1752	Edmund Keene, D.D., Camb.	Translated to Ely, 1771
22.	1771	William Markham, D.C.L., Oxon.	Translated to York, 1777
23.	1777	Beilby Porteus, D.D., Camb.	Translated to London, 1787
24.	1788	William Cleaver, D.D , Oxon.	Translated to Bangor, 1800
25.	1800	Henry Wm. Majendie, D.D., Camb.	Translated to Bangor, 1809
26.	1810	Bowyer Edward Sparke, D.D., Camb.	Translated to Ely, 1812
27.	1812	George Henry Law, D.D., Camb.	Translated to Bath and Wells, 1824
28.	1824	Charles J. Blomfield, D.D., Camb.	Translated to London, 1828
29.	1828	John Bird Sumner, D.D., Camb.	Translated to Canterbury, 1848
30.	1848	John Graham, D.D., Camb. ...	Died at Chester, 1865. Buried in the Cemetery, Chester
31.	1865	William Jacobson, D.D., Oxon.	Died at Chester, 1884. Buried in the Cemetery, Chester
32.	1884	William Stubbs, D.D., LL.D., Oxon.	Translated to Oxford 1888
33.	1889	Francis John Jayne, D.D., Oxon.	

RECTORS AND WARDENS OF MANCHESTER.

RECTORS

Before	1194	Ranulphus de Welling
		Albert de Neville
,,	1261	Peter Greslet
,,	1284	William de Marchia
,,	1292	Walter de Langton
,,	1299	Otto Grandison
,,	1301	Geoffrey de Stoke
,,	1313	John de Cuerden
		John de Arden
,,	1323	Adam de Southwick
,,	1327	John de Clandon
,,	1351	Thomas de Wyke
,,	1373	Thomas de la Warre

WARDENS

Before	1422	John Huntingdon
,,	1459	John Booth
,,	1465	Ralph Langley
,,	1481	James Stanley
,,	1485	James Stanley (second of that name)
,,	1509	Robert Cliff
,,	1515	Richard Alday
,,	1518	George West
,,	1535	George Collyer
,,	1537	Laurence Vaux
,,	1558	William Birch
,,	1570	Thomas Herle
,,	1578	John Walton
,,	1579	William Chadderton (Bishop of Chester 1579; Bishop of Lincoln 1595)
,,	1595	John Dee
,,	1608	Richard Murray
,,	1636	Richard Heyrick, deprived in 1646, reinvested 1660
,,	1667	Nicholas Stratford (Bishop of Chester 1689)
,,	1684	Richard Wroe
,,	1718	Samuel Peploe (Bishop of Chester 1726—1752)
,,	1738	Samuel Peploe, junr.
,,	1781	Richard Assheton
,,	1800	Thomas Blackburne
,,	1823	Thomas Calvert
,,	1840	Hon. William Herbert, last Warden and first Dean of Manchester

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